Islam and Democracy:

A Complex Encounter

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For:

The United States Agency for International Development
Washington D.C.

June, 1992

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the United States Agency for International Development for supporting this study and for showing infinite patience over the course of its research and writing. The author would also like to recognize thank Dr. Muhammad Khalil, Professor Gehad Auda, and Dr. Abdullahi An-Naim for sharing their thoughts with him. Finally, the author would like to thank his wife Laurie for her love and support during a difficult year of transition and change -- and for the critical intellectual support she provided during the final stages of the writing of this study.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At no time in recent history has Islam played a more vital role in the politics of Third World states than in the last five years. By skillfully exploiting political reforms, Islamists have advanced their own narrow agendas. Consequently, the prospects for sustained democratization will hinge, in part, on the ideologies put forth by Islamic groups, and on the influence that they are able to exercise over their constituencies.

An effective assessment of the role that Islamic groups play must take into account the "essential" nature of Islamic political thought. Islam envisions politics as a means of implementing God's immutable laws. The Muslim Community or umma applies these laws through procedures that subordinate the rights of the individual to the rights of the community and its leader. In this sense, Islam is authoritarian.

However, the political behavior of Muslims cannot be reduced to a static view of the "essentials" of Islam. Some Islamic political concepts have been reinterpreted to favor democracy and pluralism. Islamic "modernists" have advanced such liberal interpretations of Islam.

The key challenge facing the student of Islam and democracy is to evaluate those conditions which may favor the political fortunes of Islamic modernist groups over the political fortunes of fundamentalist groups.

Experience suggests that modernist groups advance their agendas when, 1) indigenous intellectual and/or cultural traditions embrace modernist themes, 2) when a religious elite advances these themes, and 3) when a sizeable and economically secure middle class is present to support modernist ideas.

In most Third World countries, these conditions have been absent. In fact, the pattern of development that typifies most Third World states favors Islamic fundamentalism.

Yet there are significant differences between various fundamentalist groups. "Reformists" seek to transform civil society gradually, while "radicals" seek to replace the entire political order with an Islamic state. "Tactical modernists" selectively appropriate modernist themes in an effort to advance fundamentalist goals.

Changing economic, intellectual and political conditions promote significant transformation within fundamentalist groups. The growth of the middle class encourages fundamentalists to adopt more modernist positions. But unless economic development is matched by genuine efforts to reinterpret Islamic doctrine, "modernist" shifts will remain merely a tactical maneuver to advance authoritarian goals.

Reformist fundamentalism has been the dominant form of Islamic activism in Egypt. Reformists have benefitted from the growth of Egypt's middle class, as well as from a relatively open political environment. But they have also been challenged by radical Islamists. By mediating between these groups and the state, reformists have promoted a more stable and open political system. However, by escalating their demands at each juncture, they have increased their power via elections, and posed a threat to democratic change and political pluralism.

Radical fundamentalism secured a fleeting victory in Algeria, only to be halted by a military coup. The victory of radical Islam resulted from the absence of an indigenous tradition of Islamic political thought which could provide a truly modernist alternative. This victory also was precipitated by an economic crisis that affected most profoundly those groups prone to radicalism. Although the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) tried to mobilize both lower and middle class groups, it was compelled by the logic of circumstance and by the obstinacy of its leadership to play the radical card.

Variations of reformist fundamentalism have been promoted in Nigeria by an ethnically and religiously pluralist society. Although the logic of political accommodation has not always triumphed, it has encouraged Nigeria's most influential Islamic group, the Izala, to temper its theoretical commitment to orthodox "Wahhabism." However, in the 70's and 80's, economic and political crises encouraged the rise of radical groups. The sectarian violence which followed made a return to competitive democracy less promising.

A similar process of ethnic and religious accommodation has promoted the development of a more tolerant Islam in Malaysia. This eclectic Islamic ideology was shared -- at least until recently -- by both the ruling party and the main opposition parties. However, it would premature to speak about a socially and politically institutionalized version of Islamic modernism in Malaysia. In contrast, modernist Islamic groups have developed in Indonesia.

Comparative analysis suggests that Islamic modernists will not find in the coming years a favorable environment in which to organize politically effective movements. This will be particularly the case in the Middle East. The problem is not merely one of economic crisis; in the absence of a genuine effort to reinterpret Islamic doctrine, economic development will not translate into democracy. Such an effort, however, could be advanced with greater cooperation among modernists in Southeast Asia and Islamic activists in the Middle East and North Africa.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS MADANI SAYING?

> It is necessary to have pluralism. Why? Because one must have what is needed to fulfill one's duty, and we believe it is necessary to have opposition. It existed during the time of the orthodox caliphs, so why not have it now?

In the above statement, issued two months before Algeria's June 1990 municipal and provincial elections, the leader of the country's largest political party, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), tried to reassure his critics that he supported pluralism. Pluralism, Abassi Madani insisted, is not only correct in principle; it is also "necessary" for the proper functioning of an Islamic polity. Elsewhere, Madani held that in an Islamic state, "sometimes the majority is right and sometimes the minority is right. Both are needed."[1]

To some observers of Algerian politics, Madani's remarks suggested that he was championing a liberal vision of Islam. His "modernist" orientation, some argued, put him at odds with radical elements within FIS, who have favored the establishment of an authoritarian, Islamic state. Given these differences, many observers assumed that FIS would split as it gained power.

This split did not occur. On the contrary, in the Spring of 1991 Madani adopted a more radical stance. He called for a general strike and "jihad" against the regime, and was arrested, along with his deputy, Ali Belhadj. In the months leading up to the December

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[1] From a video-taped interview with Madani provided to the Carter Center.

1991 parliamentary elections, FIS's leaders clearly declared their intention to establish an Islamic state. Alarmed, the military cancelled the second round of elections and forced President Benjedid from power, thus ending the Arab world's most ambitious experiment in democratic politics in three decades.

Algeria provides a microcosm of the dilemmas and paradoxes of democratic reform in the Arab -- and much of the wider Islamic -- world. In particular, it offers a graphic example of the failure of Islamic leaders to galvanize support for a "liberal" alternative to the authoritarian ethos of Islamic fundamentalism.

Algeria's story has been repeated in many times and places. In Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Nigeria, the Sudan, and Tunisia, Islamic modernists have attempted yet failed to advance a viable alternative to the authoritarian vision espoused by Islamic fundamentalists. Moreover, they have failed not only in authoritarian states; they have failed in relatively open political systems. More often than not, fundamentalism has been the "Islam of choice" among those Muslims who believe that Islam should determine the parameters of political and social life.

Given the competitive advantage that fundamentalist Islam has enjoyed in the past, and given the increasingly open political market of Third World states, what chance will Islamic modernists have to transform their ideals into a coherent and politically organized movement, a movement which can effectively compete with

the challenges posed by Islamic fundamentalists? In short, what conditions will support a "choice" in favor of Islamic modernism?

The answers to these questions are a matter of sharp debate, and hinge upon three important schools of thought. For the "essentialists," Islam is a static body of ideals and traditions. Although such traditions provide little in the way of specific political guidance, the basic moral ethos of Islam is said to be intrinsically authoritarian. Thus, the essentialists maintain that anyone who suggests that Islam and democracy might coexist --like FIS's Madani, for instance -- is either a cynical opportunist using a democratic label to camouflage authoritarian goals, or a naive idealist whose efforts are bound to misfire under the onslaught of Islamic fundamentalism.

In contrast, the "materialists" argue that Islam has little bearing on politics. The failure of Islamic modernists is seen principally as a consequence of the socio-economic conditions that plague Third World states. Their failure reflects, in particular, the weakness of the professional middle class and the bourgeoisie relative to the more populous petite bourgeoisie and "intermediate" social classes. It is this imbalance, the materialists assert, which pushes leaders like Madani to adopt fundamentalist ideologies in last ditch efforts to placate the "masses."

During the eighties the debate between the essentialists and materialists became a hot political issue. In one corner, the essentialists' most vociferous spokesman, Bernard Lewis, insinuated

that almost all Western students of Islam had erred in their attempts to attribute the actions of Muslims to secondary "reasons" rather than to "the nature of Islam."[2] In the other corner, the champion of the materialists, Edward Said, accused Lewis and others of deliberately "re-presenting" Islam in ways calculated to justify American domination over the Middle East.[3]

By the time the blood letting ended, as one observer put it, things had reached such a point that "one may well be damned as soon as one mentions 'Islam' at all."[4] This was something of an exaggeration; yet the remark reflected the extent to which the Lewis-Said dispute had deterred creative research. It had become almost impossible to stake out an analytically compelling alternative that could transcend the simplistic assumptions of the two dominant approaches.

This paper does seek to provide such an alternative by elaborating an "interpretive" view of Islam and political change. The approach here is based on the premise that we cannot reduce the phenomenon of Islamic activism to either an unchanging set of ideals on the one hand, or simply to socio-economic conditions on the other. Instead, we must synthesize the essentialist and materialist perspectives into a dynamic model to highlight the ways

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[2] Bernard Lewis, "The Return of Islam" Middle East Review Vol. Xll, Nol. 1, Fall 1979.

[3] Edward Said Orientalism (New York: Vintage, 1979).

[4] Edward Mortimer, Faith and Power, The Politics of Islam (New York: Vintage Books, 1982) p. 16.

in which fundamental Islamic concepts interact with socio-economic and political conditions to accommodate different kinds of regimes.

As a prelude to this analysis I begin in Part One by placing the question of Islam and politics in a wider analytical framework. I argue that the prospects for creating a "democratic bargain" in much of the Islamic World hinge in no small way on creating an intellectually coherent and politically organized alternative to Islamic fundamentalism.

Having made this case, I discuss the two dominant approaches that have thus far guided the study of Islam and politics. I begin in Part Two by presenting an overview of the "essential" political concepts in Islamic thought. As you shall see, I do not break fully with the assumptions of the essentialist school. In fact, I argue that many Islamic concepts of political community do lend themselves to an authoritarian view of politics. The vitality of these concepts is demonstrated by the remarkable fact that they have appeared and reappeared in the ideologies and programs of Islamists <u>regardless</u> of the different historical, cultural, political, economic or national contexts in which they operate.

However, when viewed through a critical lens, the essentialist method displays as many liabilities as it does assets. Its most enduring asset lies in its assessment of the trials and tribulations of Islamic modernism: it suggests that the failure of Islamists to create a coherent liberal vision lies in part in the enduring instrinsic appeal of certain Islamic values. Its most

glaring defect lies in its facile premise that Islamic ideals, in and of themselves, preclude the creation of a more democratic interpretation of politics. The process of reinterpretation, I suggest, may indeed be constrained by these values; but it also depends on the socio-economic and political conditions in which Islamists labor.

Part Three develops the "materialist" argument by analyzing the relationship between Islamic ideologies and social classes. Drawing on empirical studies, I argue that fundamentalist groups are spawned by the growth of "intermediate" social classes such as students, malemployed bureaucrats, shopkeepers, and the like. These groups find in the utopian vision of fundamentalism an alluring "answer" to their social predicament. By contrast, modernist-leaning movements are engendered by the growth of professional and entrepreneurial classes. These groups espouse a more pluralistic interpretation of Islam that speaks to their market-oriented economic interests.

This materialist analysis suggests that the prospects for Islamic modernism will probably not improve in the coming years, since those groups most given to modernist ideologies are far out-numbered by those who favor fundamentalism. It has so far been this imbalance in favor of impoverished groups that has pushed liberal Islamists like FIS's Madani to embrace radical Islam. This analysis also implies, however, that shifts in the balance of social power will induce groups who previously had favored fundamentalism to

adopt more liberal views of Islam. In this way modernism may emerge out of the womb of fundamentalism itself.

While a materialist analysis provides a vital corrective to the static view of essentialism, it nevertheless underestimates the intrinsic challenges of reinterpreting concepts and ideas that are deeply embedded in Islamic communities. By reducing Islamic political activism to a mechanistic equation, it fails to provide a systematic framework to assess the conditions under which Islamic ideals and socio-political exigencies interact to generate different forms of Islamic political activism.

To probe this dynamic, Part Four will move beyond the one-dimensional confines of the above approaches to develop an "interpretive" framework. By theorizing how discrete sets of intellectual and socio-political forces interact to produce either fundamentalist or modernist movements, this approach offers a useful analytical guide for identifying latent yet significant intellectual and socio-political forces that may yield politically organized Islamic modernist movements.

Part Five demonstrates the empirical utility of this approach by applying it to five case studies drawn from North Africa, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The comparative analysis here suggests three lessons: one, the forging of modernist groups capable of advancing their ideologies in an open, democratic political arena must await a process of intellectual, socio-economic and political transformation. Two, while in some

cases there are signs that this transformation is unfolding, the very conditions which have weakened authoritarian regimes in recent years will discourage the growth of Islamic modernist groups in the next decade. Three, the most promising changes, particularly on the intellectual plane, will probably occur outside of the Middle East. The implications of these three lessons will be discussed in the Conclusion of this study.

PART ONE: CHANGING BARGAINS

Those states that comprise the Islamic world and represent approximately 850 million people have undergone extraordinary political and social changes in the last half century. Most significantly, Islamic groups and ideologies are occupying a pivotal place in the political arenas of these countries.

The emerging brand of politics, in which Islam plays a key role, is the result of what I call the sudden collapse of the "ruling bargain." In many cases, this trend has provided an unprecedented opportunity for Islamists to promote their agendas through democratic process.

From "Ruling Bargain" to "Democratic Bargain"

Every state in which Muslims are a majority has experienced, at least since the early fifties, a long, often unbroken, stretch of authoritarian rule. The nature of this rule has, of course, differed from region to region and country to country. The tradition-bound authoritarian states of the Arab Gulf do not claim

the revolutionary mantle of the radical Arab states. The blend of military and personalistic rule that typifies Suharto's regime in Indonesia differs from the military juntas in Pakistan that for three decades regularly intervened to "rectify" the democratic process.

Nevertheless, there is a common thread that has been woven through the political fabric of all these countries -- the "ruling bargain." Through this authoritarian compact, rulers promised their citizens social welfare and economic security in exchange for political quiescence.

During the eighties this bargain began to unravel in many Third World states. This development was occasioned by the paralysis of inefficient statist economies, sky-rocketing debt burdens and growing pressure from creditor states and institutions for structural adjustment. Faced with inescapable pressures for economic reform, many regimes began to reduce and even eliminate the social benefits that had sustained the "ruling bargain."

No longer able to "purchase" political quiescence, authoritarian leaders searched for new bargaining positions. Another pattern gradually emerged and took on global proportions by 1990: in return for popular support and for acquiescence to arduous economic reforms, ruling elites offered a measure of political liberalization and democratization. They thus used "democratic bargains" to mobilize continued support for their leadership as

well as for the new and politically controversial task of market reform.

From Democratic Bargain to Islamic Activism

In the Islamic world, this process was most pronounced in the poor Arab states of the Middle East and North Arica -- in Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan. In all four states, ruling elites tried to advance economic reforms by opening up their political systems.

However, the forging of a democratic bargain proved extremely difficult. Those groups which stood to gain from market reforms -- businessmen, independent intellectuals and professionals etc -- were outnumbered by those who stood to loose -- students, mal-employed state workers, managers of import substituting firms etc....The latter groups were not keen on the idea of relinguishing material benefits derived from statist economies simply for a vague promise of political rights. In short, a critical social prerequisite for sustaining a democratic bargain -- the existence of an organized constituency willing to back economic reforms -- was in short supply.

This contradictory situation revealed itself in the sequence of events that led to the initiation of democratic bargains in Algeria and Jordan. In both states, rioters took to the streets to protest stabilization measures. In response, Amman and Algiers initiated democratic openings in an effort to gain support for economic reforms.

These actions, though laudable in theory, ignored the fact that many urban protestors were more outraged by the rising cost of food than by the reluctance of their rulers to advance democracy. Thus when the gates of democracy opened, those groups flocked into the arms of Islamic parties hoping for an "Islamic solution" to their economic woes.

The first indication of this trend manifested itself in Egypt, where the Muslim Brothers won the largest bloc of opposition seats in the 1987 Peoples Assembly elections after allying with the Socialist Labor Party. They subsequently made gains in traditionally liberal arenas such as professional syndicates. Two years later, in the November 1989 elections, Islamists won 34 out of 80 seats in Jordan's House of Representatives. These impressive gains were later surpassed in Algeria when FIS won victories both in the June 1990 municipal and provincial elections, and in the first round of the December 1991 parliamentary elections.

These trends have profound implications for democracy in the Islamic world. Previous events suggest that Islamists will extend their power wherever and whenever the foundations of authoritarianism loosen, and support of economically disenfranchised groups can be rapidly mobilized. The future of democracy in these countries may thus hinge at least in part on the ability of Islamists to assimilate the ideals and institutions of competitive democracy into a modernist Islamic ideology.

Accounting for Islam: The Problem of Interpretation

What are the chances for promoting a modernist Islamic alternative? The answer to this question, as I have noted, is as much a political as it is an intellectual problem. Indeed, most attempts to interpret the relationshp between Islam and politics have been mired in the bitter debate between the materialists and essentialists.

To move beyond the polemics of this debate, we must forge an analytic framework that will allow us to systematically evaluate the ways in which economic and social conditions interact with intellectual and cultural forces to produce and sustain a myriad of Islamic ideologies and activist groups.

Towards this end, I will begin by evaluating the contributions and limitations of the "essentialist" approach. After extracting its most useful insights, I will explore the "materialist" view of Islam and politics. Finally, I will integrate the contributions of both schools into a dynamic, "interpretive" model of Islam and politics.

PART TWO: THE "ESSENTIALS" OF ISLAM[5]

The great merit of the essentialist perspective is that it takes Islamic doctrines, principles and ideals seriously. It as-

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[5] Those already familiar with the basic elements of Islamic political thought may want to move on to the sections that follow this analysis. However, it is absolutely critical that the reader have a basic familiarity with these themes.

sumes that ideals do shape the politics of individuals, communities and states. What it does less well, however, is tell us how Islam shapes political action. This is a critical issue that I will address later. For the moment, however, I will focus on Islam's central concepts -- concepts which bear on the question of political behavior.

The Birth & Genesis of Islam: Politics in the Service of Religion

> The kind of society that a community builds for itself depends upon its belief as to the nature and purpose of the universe and the place of the human soul within it... Islam is possibly the only religion which has... consistently aimed to build up a society on this principle.[6]

Islam was born in an environment in which the distinction between religion as a body of norms, and politics as a doctrine of rule, did not exist. When the Prophet Muhammad (b. 570 AD, d. 632) began to proclaim the oneness God, or **Allah** (derived from the words al (the) and ilah, god), his message was understood to be just as political as it was religious. By demanding the abolition of idols at the **Kaba**, the religious sanctuary of Mecca, the Prophet was challenging not only religious belief, but the legitimacy of the Meccan elite, who ran a profitable business in religious artifacts.

The essence of God's message, recited by Muhammad in a state of **wahy** or divine inspiration, was that the Arabs had divided themselves into fractious tribes struggling only for selfish

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[6]. H.A.R. Gibb, Modern Trends in Islam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947) pp. 86-7. Gibb's claim of "consistency" is open to question, as we shall see.

benefit. The result was violence, chaos and social injustice, exemplified by the corruption of Mecca and the specter of poverty and discord in that city.

The establishment of a unified **umma** or Islamic community was a direct attempt to overcome the strife and inequity that had become part of the tribal system. Devotion to a single god and to His divine law as revealed to Muhammed meant that each Muslim would not only proclaim his faith, but would also uphold the ideal of the **umma** by observing **Sharia** and by following the **sunna** of the Prophet. Ultimately, then, individual piety would be translated into social justice. The foundation for social and political behavior was thus already provided for within the guidelines of Islam.[7]

However, there is an inherent paradox in the fact that while Islam's extensive repertoire of normative guidelines is supposed to provide a framework for sustaining the community, it actually fails to provide a sufficient basis for political orgainization. The absence of clear instruction in translating Islamic ideals into practice is reflected in the paucity of specifically political directives in the basic sources of Islamic thought: the **Quran**, the **Sunna**, and the **hadith**.

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[7] The Sharia is the body of codified Islamic law. The term sharia is not mentioned in the Quran. It was used by the Ummayd Caliphs starting at the end of teh 8th century. The term "sunna" means the moral example of the Prophet, as demonstrated directly in the Quran itself, and in the oral stories or hadiths of the Prophet's life.

Nevertheless, there are a number of important political concepts to be found throughout the corpus of Islamic thought. These concepts derive from the early historical practice of the Islamic community, as well as from the Quran and Hadith thesmelves.

Islam as Politics: Implicit and Explicit Concepts

Perhaps the most important concept within Islam is that of the **umma**. Early in the Quran, God tells his community that, "We have made of you an **Umma** justly balanced, That ye might be witnesses Over the peoples... (2:143). Umma means "nation," not in the sense of a race or ethnic group, but of a community united in devotion to God. By translating God's precepts into action, the umma is to inspire other people (nas) to submit to God -- to be Muslims.

At its core, the concept of umma places a priority on unity and uniformity as opposed to pluralism and difference. This does not preclude pluralism; indeed the Quran insists that if, "God had so willed, He would have made all of you one community, but (He has not) that He may test you in what He has given you: so compete in goodness." (5:48). However, the very purpose of competition is to permit a process by which those who have not yet submitted to God are persuaded to do so. The ultimate goal is unity.[8]

Within this framework, Muslims are warned not to engage in "cliquing," or "secret meetings," (58:8-10) or "creating discord on earth." (9:33-34). The unifying urge is reinforced by the Quran's

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[8] I will discuss this point further in the case studies of Islamic activism in Egypt and Algeria.

condemnation of sects or parties, which it calls **hizb** (plural **ahzab**).[9] Such groups are contrasted to the only legitimate party, the "party of God" (hizb Allah), (58:22). Unlike the latter, the ahzab, by "splitting up their religion" and by "rejoicing in that which (each party) has for itself," threaten the umma, (30:32), since the umma is dedicated to the principle of unity, or tawhid.

The concept of **tawhid** is integrally related to the concept of the umma. Before each prayer Muslims repeat the shahada: "I bear witness that there is no God but God; I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger (rusul) of God." Because of this testimony and the necessity of tawhid, Muslims cannot organize their umma around any ideas, documents or institutions that would claim the same allegiance that God commands. Those who "join gods with Allah" (30:31) are committing idolatry or shirk, a crime against God. Thus it is implied that political institutions must preserve tawhid by upholding the unity of God and the umma.

Some logistical basis for translating the ideal of the umma and of tawhid into political life can be found in the Quran. There, there are six fairly explicit "political" concepts: **khalifa**, or (**Caliph**), **bayah**, **ijma**, **shura**, **shariah**, and **dhimmi**.

The notion of a Caliph is premised on the belief that only God is sovereign, and that man's duty as God's "deputy" is to "rule for

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[9]. See Quran, 3:103, 13:36, 19:37, 28:11-13, 29:47, 33:20-22. Hizb can also translate as "party," and it is rendered as such in translation of the Quran. The association of sectarianism with "parties," as we shall see later, accounts in part for the hostility of Muslim fundamentalists to competitive party politics.

the God" on earth.[10] In this sense, all men are "caliphs," a concept which the Quran suggests when it refers to Adam as the first Caliph one earth, (2:30), and when it refers later to the umma, as a whole, as (His) agents, or (khalifa) of the earth," (6:165).

Although the Quran does not refer specifically to the Prophet Muhammad as "Caliph," it came to pass that the leaders of the umma after Muhammad were called caliphs. While this association of "Caliph" with leader of the umma was not sanctified directly by the Quran, it did reflect an aspect of guardianship consistent with Muhammed's relationship to his followers.

While the concept of "Caliph" took on political meaning, the basic principle remained that only God is sovereign. In theory, the Caliph's task was to merely oversee the translation of God's will into practice. If, in fact, it could be shown that the Caliph abused his authority by claiming sovereignty over the umma, the community had a right and duty to replace him.

The relationship between the Caliph and his community was enshrined in the concept of "Fealty of Allah's Good Pleasure," or **bayah**. Bayah is mentioned directly in the Quran, and refers to the moment when the "Believers" "swore Fealty to thee (the Prophet), "(48:18). With the "clasping of hands," (the literal meaning of bayah), the community pledged loyalty to the Caliph in return for

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[10]. See Frederick M. Denny's short but insightful discussion of khalifa, in his Islam (San Francisco, Harper, 1987).

his pledge to rule according to Islamic law or Shariah. In short, Bayah was a contract that gave the Caliph wide powers, provided he respected God's sovereignty and upheld the Shariah.[11]

In theory, the community's right to withdraw support for the Caliph softened the authoritarian logic attached to the concepts of Khalifa and bayah. However, the Quran offers no clear procedure either for choosing or deposing a Caliph. On both questions, the Quran says only that the choice of Caliph is to be based on his moral superiority (4:58).

Four key; concepts also temper the authoritarian proclivities of Khalifa and bayah. Two of them, in fact, have recently been interpreted to support a democratic vision of politics. The first is "consensus" or ijma. The practice of ijma was sanctified after the Prophet's death, by a hadith in which Muhammad said "my umma will never agree in error." This suggested that the community -- or its religious elite -- was fit to choose the Caliph.

This said, ijma is not the same as political liberalism or democracy.[12] It derives its force from an elite that "represents" but is not elected by the people. More importantly, it calls for a collective position that cannot be challenged by a minority. Indeed, ijma renders irrelevant the existance of a majority or minority.

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[11]. I shall address the question of Shariah below.

[12]. See Gibb, Modern Trends p. 11.

Along with Ijma comes shura, potentially the most democratic concept found in Islam. The Quran first mentions this principle when it identifies the believers as "those whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation (amruhum shura bainahum), (42:38);[13] and second when it commands the Prophet to "consult them (the people) in their affairs," (3:159).

This emphasis on "mutual consultation" suggests an egalitarian rather than a top-down system. Yet the ruler's obligation to follow the advice of others is of a moral rather than political nature. Since the Quran provides no mechanism to insure that the Caliph must follow the counsel of his colleagues, it weakens the democratic potential embedded in the concept of shura.

A third political guideline which theoretically might restrain the power of the Caliph is **Shariah**. The term shariah does not appear in the Quran and the application of shariah law began only during the Ummayad Dynasty at the close of the eighth century.[14] However, the concept of Islamic law is central to the Quran, which puts an injunction on the umma to translate God's din[15] into practice.

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[13]. See Fazlur Rahman, "The Principle of Shura and the Role of the Ummah in Islam," in Mumtaz Ahmad (ed.) State Politics and Islam (Washington DC: American Trust Publications, 1986) pp. 87-96.

[14]. Fazlur Rahman, Islam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) p. 79.

[15]. Din means both religion, judgement and law in the Quran.

The term shariah means "path leading to water." It was put forth by Allah and its application is as vital to Islam as water is to life. Theoretically, fair application of the Shariah is sufficient to sustain the umma and to create a viable political system.[16]

To the extent that God's commands are absolute amd immutable, Shariah demands uncontested allegiance from Muslims. The potential here for authoritarian use of Islamic law was underscored in the 10th century when ijtihad, free interpretation of the law, ceased. After the "closing of the gate of ijtihad," orthodox Caliphs and the ulema, the religius elite, had a mandate to execute the Sharia as a fixed body of law.[17]

However, precisely because shariah was understood to flow directly from God, it could also act as a restraint on the Caliph. To properly administer God's commandments, the Caliph had to defer to the religious authority of the ulema in interpreting the law. The ulema's authority became particularly pronounced on matters about which the Quran was silent.[18]

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[16] Islamic fundamentalists insist that the application of Shariah can substitute not only for a constitution, but for almost all political institutions.

[17] With the "closing of the gate of ijithad" emerged the four main schools of thought in Sunni Islam: Hanafi, Maliki,Shafii, and Hanbali.

[18] The Quran contains a number of injunctions regarding personal law -- marriage, inheritance, divorces -- and punishments or "huddud." It says virtually nothing about the role of a judiciary in politics, or the relationship between politics and laws. This limitation provided the ulema with considerable

The foregoing principles of Islam all deal with the relationship of Muslims to the umma. Yet there also emerged in the Islamic world several concepts that delt with the place of non-Muslim minorities. The most important of these concepts is that of **dhimmi**, the "protected community."

The dhimmi includes Christians and Jews who did not embrace Islam during the time of the Prophet. The Quran makes clear that these groups erred in their failure to follow the Prophet; it implies that they thus cannot be full members of the umma. The dhimmi belongs to the world of Dar al-harb, the "abode of war" which stood against the "abode of Islam."

However, the Quran also makes clear that, as "People of the Book," Jews and Christians must be given the status of a "protected minority." In return for tolerance and protection, the dhimmi was to pay a poll tax to the Islamic community.

The Shariah extends equal legal rights to the dhimmi. However, Jews and Christians do not have equal political rights, such as access to formal positions of political power. The Quran also makes clear that any Muslim (**kafir**) who abandons his religion or questions the "final message" of Muhammad, likewise is not a part of the umma and has no rights whatsoever in the Islamic community.[19]

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discretion -- through ijma and ijtihad -- to interpret the law.

[19] In the contemporary Islamic world, this doctrinal hostility is manifested in the fate of groups such as Iran's Bahais, who have been subjected to a level of persecution that exceeds that suffered

The concepts of dhimmi and kafir reaffirm the exclusive side of Islam's central ethos -- the quest for unity in a brotherhood devoted to God. In Islam, the individual realizes his God given potential through his contribution to the umma. This orientation may be tempered by doctrinal safeguards such as ijma and shura; but absent a profound reinterpretion of these concepts, it would be difficult to alter the authoritarian bent in Islamic thought.

Nevertheless, a process of reintrepreting Islamic thought did begin in the 19th century. From this emerged a contest between two primary schools of revivalist thought: Islamic fundamentalism/orthodoxy and Islamic liberalism/modernism. Below I will discuss the "inversion" of religion and politics that provoked this revivalist movement in the 19th century. I will then consider the essentialist explanation for Islamic modernism's failures in the 20th century.

The Inversion of Religion and Politics

The Islamic revivalist movement of the late 19th and early 20th century was inspired by the memory of a pristine age of unity and strength, when the umma was led first by the Prophet Muhammad and then by the succeeding four "Rightly Guided Caliphs."

This memory was based, however, on an idealization of the past. From the moment of the Prophet's death in 632, the umma was

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by the Jews or Christians.

rent by divisions, the most infamous of which was the split between the Sunnis and the minority Shi'ites.[20]

Yet despite (or perhaps because of) internal divisions, the memory of a glorious age persisted. Muslim scholars sustained this myth by drawing a fairly legitimate distinction between the first 30 years of the umma, when the Caliphs upheld Islamic precepts fairly closely, and the ensuing centuries, when the Caliphate became the domain of a military-political elite who subordinated religious institutions to the temporal authority of the state.[21]

Muslims justified this subordination of religion to the state by claiming that it was better to endure tyranny for 60 years than to tolerate one day of disorder. Under conditions of external threat, Muslims furthermore accepted the new role of the ulema, who were quickly co-opted by the state and simply legimitated the Caliph's actions.

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[20] After Muhammad's death, an assembly of notables proclaimed Abu Bakr Caliph. Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law and cousin, challenged this decision, insisting that only the decendants of the Prophet would be able to divine the esoteric meaning of the Quran. This position created a major doctrinal rift between the partisans or Shia of Ali, and the supporters of Abu Bakr, the Sunnis. The Sunnis held that the truth of the Quran was accessible to anyone with the requisite intellectual abilities and thus the choice of Caliph should be left up to the consensus of the community. This dispute led to the murder of Ali and to the martyrdom of his son, Hussein. After Hussein's death, the Sh'ites were ruled by a succession of eleven infallible "Imams," all of whom were decendants of Ali. The Twelfth Imam was said to be in "occultation." Only upon his return could a truly legitimate Islamic State be proclaimed. Thus the Shi'ites in effect proclaimed all the Sunni Caliphates illegitimate.

[21]. Hamid Enayat Modern Islamic Political Thought (Austin: THe University of Texas Press, 1982) p. 11.

Islamic Revivalism: Returning "Islam" to its Proper Place

Muslim revivalists argued that this profane inversion of religion and politics had been catastrophic for the umma. They claimed that this alone caused the fragmentation of the Islamic community during the Medieval Era, and also later caused the decline of the Ottoman Empire (1517-1914).

This judgment was shared by orthodox or fundamentalist revivalists and by their modernist competitors.[22] The leading thinkers in both schools asserted that the only way to combat Western imperialism was to reinfuse Islamic principles into political life. This required reopening the "gate of ijtihad" (interpretation of the law) to enable Muslims to reinterpret Islamic ideals in ways that spoke to their changing needs. Thus a move forward first demanded a move back.

However, the two schools differed in their conception of the "move back." For fundamentalists, emphasis was on the restoration of doctrinal and spiritual unity -- tawhid. Their primary goal was to reestablish a unified community resembling, as closely and as literally as possible, the model of the early Islamic era.

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[22] I have no trouble with the term "fundamentalism" as applied to the phenomenon of orthodox Islamic revivalism. Many Muslim scholars refer in English to this phenomenon as "fundamentalism," or in Arabic as usuliyya which means "rootism" or "principlism." For an revealing comparative discussion of "fundamentalisms," see Martin E. Marty and Scott Appleby, Fundamentalisms Observed, (Chicago: The Fundamentalism Project, University of Chicago Press, 1991).

The fundamentalist perspective was first given a dramatic, political voice by the Arab-Muslim revivalist, Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhab. In the mid 18th century, Abdul-Wahhab launched a violent campaign against Sufism, a form of Islamic mysticism widely practiced at that time in the "Hijaz" of the Arabian Peninsula. The "Wahhabi" model later inspired other fundamentalist reformers, including the Syrian Muhammad Rashid Ridda (d. 1935), who was active in Egypt; Hassan al-Bannah (1906-1949), the leader of Egypt's Muslim Brethren; Muhammad Ahmad (d. 1885) of the Sudan; and Mawlana Mawdudi (1903-1979), the Pakistani theoretician whose arguments for an "Islamic State" have had an enduring impact in Islamic circles.

In contrast to the fundamentalists, Islamic modernists argued for a flexible interpretation of Islam's basic ideals. The goal was not a literal revival of the early umma, but rather the creative application of the spirit of tawhid to the exigencies of modern life. Through an open process of ijtihad, concepts such as ijma and shura could be reinterpreted to provide a democratic, pluralist framework for reestablishing the Islamic community.

The originator of this modernist school was the great Egyptian theologian, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1095). Other Islamic thinkers followed in his foot steps, such as Khalid Muhammad Khalid of Egypt; Ziya Gok Alp (d. 1924) of Turkey; Fazlur Rahman of Pakistan, (d. 1987); Mahmoud Mohammad Taha (d. 1985) of the Sudan; and Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleqani of Iran (d. 1979).

The "Essentialists" Explain the Failure of Islamic Modernism

Much of the debate about Islam and democracy revolves around the failure of Islamic modernists to advance a coherent vision of Islam. The "essentialists" attribute this failure to the innate nature of Islam. If they are right, we would have to assume that the prospects for a democratic, Islamic alternative are slim.

The work of Gustave von Grunebaum and H.A.R. Gibb exemplify the essentialist method. Other scholars whose work reflects this approach include Sylvia Haim, Bernard Lewis, and P.J. Vatikiotis. Some Arab scholars, such as Saad Eddin Ibrahim, have also embraced variations of the essentialist method. [23] However, to my mind, no one has applied this method with more skill and insight than Gibb.

Modern Trends in Islam

Gibb's work, Modern Trends in Islam, focuses on a generation of modernists in Egypt and Turkey who tried to advance a democratic view of Islam during the first half of the twentieth century. Gibb attributes the failure of these modernists to factors either in-

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[23]. Grunebaum, Modern Islam: The Search for Cultural Identity (New York: Vintage Books, 1964). Gibb, Modern Trends; Sylvia Haim, Arab Nationalism: An Anthology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962; (See in particular her introduction). P.J. Vatikiotis, The Modern History of Egypt (New York: Praeger, 1969); Bernard Lewis, "The Return of Islam," in Michael Curtis (ed.), Religion and Politics in the Middle East (Boulder: Westview, 1981) pp. 9-30. Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "An introduction to understanding Egypt" in Saad Eddin Ibrahim (ed.) Egypt in a Quarter of a Century (Beirut: Mahad al-inma'a al-Arabi, 1981) (in Arabic).

trinsic to Islam, or to the "atomism of the Arab mind."[24] This approach sometimes descends into a form of racism:

> The student of Arabic civilization is constantly brought up against the striking contrast between the imaginative power displayed...in certain branches of Arabic literature...and the pedantry, displayed in reasoning... The Arab mind...cannot throw off its intense feeling for the separateness...of the concrete events ... It is this...which explains...the aversion of the Muslims from the thought-processes of rationalism.[25]

Despite such awkwardly reasoned passages, much of Gibb's work provides a useful picture of the intellectual limitations inherent in the modernist attempt to reinterpret Islam along democratic lines.

Gibb makes two key points. The first is that many Islamic ideals have an embedded logic that cannot be overridden by even the most sophisticaed "reintepretation." Ijma, is "essentially" an authoritarian doctrine because it celebrates a consensus that all must submit to.[26] Similarly, he says, modernism cannot overcome unequivocal, and clearly anti-liberal, Quranic injunctions such as the statement that "men have a standing above women".[27]

The second point is more complex. Islamic modernists, he argues, were inspired by a mythical view of the early Islamic umma. The tendency to romanticize the early Caliphate was reinforced by

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[24]. Gibb, Modern Trends p. 15.

[25]. Ibid. p. 7.

[26]. Ibid. pp. 10, 11, 113.

[27]. Ibid. p. 102.

Western romantic-nationalist ideologies that were imported during the close of the 19th century.

Gibb suggests that this romanticism contributed to a process whereby modernists could attribute to Islamic terms a contemporary meaning that did not exist in history. Islamic fundamentalists, he admits, did the same thing. But Gibb implies that this romanticism simply allowed the fundamentalists to advance their ideology with a literal rendering of Islamic tenets. Fundamentalists thus claimed to be the true champions of Islam and used this to effectively discredit their modernist competitors. For Gibb, Islam itself, in the final analysis, explains the failure of Islamic modernism.[28]

The Urge for Unity in a Diverse Islamic World

The notion that deeply embedded Islamic values continue to influenc the debate over democratic reform is demonstrated by the resilience of key concepts put forth in the ideologies of Islamic groups. Regardless of different historical, social, intellectual, cultural and political circumstances, these groups consistently are motivated by a common quest to reestablish Islamic community.

The Muslim Brethren, for instance, emerged in the thirties as a mass movement dedicated to expelling the British from Egypt.[29] The leaders of the Brethren saw no contradiction between their nationalist and universalist goals: Egyptian nationalism would

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[28]. Ibid. p. 102-120.

[29] I shall have much more to say about the Brethren below.

serve as a beacon for the reestablishment of unity throughout the Islamic world.

The ethos that motivated the Brethren was based upon Islamic unity through the umma. The Brethren's leader, Hassan al-Banna, made this point time and time again in his writings, insisting that the goal of Muslims should be to rebuild the umma of the Prophet:

> On the foundation of this...Quranic social organization the first Islamic state arose, believing in it deeply, applying it meticulously...Unity, it all its meanings ... pervaded this new-risen umma...since all acted according to a single creed and a unified and comprehensive control...For all this imposing strength...the factors of disintegration came to insinuate themselves into the fiber of this Quranic umma...So was the unity of the state rent asunder.[30]

In the forties the Brethren formed a loosely-knit organization to export its ideology throughout the Middle East and beyond. Brethren organizations were established in Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Iraq. The social, economic and cultural make-up of these countries differed considerably, yet the basic ideals of the Brethren found a receptive audience.

Outside the Sunni-Arab Middle East, we find other examples of the alluring appeal of unity. Iran's Islamic Revolution provides a dramatic example of this.

Iran's revolution was inspired by religious and political traditions that sharply set Iran apart from much of the Islamic Middle East. Iran was a Persian, rather than Arab country, whose

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[30] Charles Wendell, Translator, Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Banna, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) pp. 17-21.

Shi'ite traditions held that the full revelation of the Quran would come only with the return of the "Imam."[31]

Khomeini incorporated this and other Shi'ite themes into his ideology. Yet, at the core of his thought was a notion faimiliar to all Muslims -- the urge for communal unity. As Khomeini insisted, unity, or tawhid, is the very essence of Islam:

> You see for yourselves that in the action carried out by the people...all the classes were partners...They all joined their voices. What was this united voice? The voice was: We want an Islamic republic...But these materialists who say that Islam... has been mobilized for democracy... (or that) those who shouted and called God's name aloud...merely want an improvement in their material life...(do not understand)....It is reasonable for a person to shout for his stomach and then give up his life? Islam's aim is not housing. It ...aims and embraces everything...Islam is everything.[32]

Islam as Everything?

In a curious way, Khomeini's understanding of Islam resembles that of the essentialists. Both believe that "Islam is everything." But there are other ways to interpret Islam, as Khomeini himself knew; indeed his rise to power was proceeded by a modernist movement from which he selectively distilled pertinent themes.*

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[31] See Marvin Zonis, and Daniel Brumberg, "Khomeini, The Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Arab World" Harvard Middle East Papers, Modern Series Number 5.

[32] FBIS-NES 24-242, 12/14, 19. "Khomeyni Speech To Craftsmen," Tehran Domestic Service, December 13, 1979.

* See H.E. Chehabi, Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: The Liberation Movement Under the Shah and Khomeini (Ithaca, Cornell, 1991).

After assuming power, he was eager to dispel the notion that Islam could be reduced to material factors.

Essentialists attribute Khomeini's victory over his modernist rival to the "authoritarian" nature of Islam. I would argue, however, that this conclusion is driven by a failure to clearly distinguish between "determinants" and "constraints." It is most useful to view the Islamic heritage as a <u>constraint</u> which complicates -- but does not preclude -- the growth of modernist movements. Such movements are also affected by socio-economic forces. These forces must be accounted for, lest we assume that "Islam" itself condemns Muslims to an authoritarian fate.

PART THREE: THE MATERIALIST VIEW OF ISLAM AND POLITICS

The materialist approach to Islam and politics emerged more as a critique of essentialist analysis than as a coherent alternative to it. As such, it did not initially form a coherent "school" of thought. In time, however, there emerged in the elements of a materialist approach. This approach links certain kinds of Islamic movements and ideologies to the interests of specific social classes and groups. Below I will examine the materialist critique of the materialist approach, and then consider its primary contributions as well as limitations.

Said's Critique of "Orientalism"

While several scholars have advanced a materialist critique of essentialism,[33] no writer has done so with a much cogency --and controversy -- as Edward Said. In his study, Orientalism, Said argues that Western scholars have reduced the complexities of Islamic politics to a few simple idealized categories, which they have advanced to "represent" Islam to the West, as well as to the Islamic world itself.[34] This act of "re-presentation," Said claims, is motivated by a conscious or unconscious political motive: the desire to portray the Islamic world as intrinsically inferior to

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[33]. See essays by Talal Asad, Eric David, Pandelis Glavanis, Roger Owen, Fanny Colonna, Roger Owen and Bryan Turner in Review of Middle East Studies, Volumes 1, (1975); 11, (1976) and 111, (1977). Talal Asad, (ed.) Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter (London: Ithaca Press, 1975); Timothy Mitchell, Colonizing Egypt (Cairo: American University Press, 1988). Mitchell's work has also been published in the United States.

[34]. Edward Said Orientalism (New York: Vintage, 1979).

Western society and thus deserving of political and economic subordination to the West.

The assertion that essentialist perspectives form part of an imperialist "project," or that most if not all Western studies of the Islamic world are dominated by essentialist assumptions and the political motives that accompany these assumptions, is a dubious claim. However, implicit in Said's argument is a methodological point that is important. He raises this point in the conclusion of his work, when he argues that:

> Between the people and "Islam" there was obviously a dynamic encounter of sorts, yet what mattered to the Western student was the supervening power of Islam to make intelligible the experiences of the Islamic people, not the other way around.[35]

Said's message is that in order to understand what "Islam" is in a particular context, in order to explain its role in the actual lives of people, we need to examine the conditions of these lives in their historical and material circumstances, rather than through some a priori conception of "Islam."

Social Analyses of Islam and Politics

Said's argument was hardly missed by students of Islam and democracy. There are many studies which illuminate the relationship between Islamic reformism on the one hand, and socio-economic conditions on the other.

Nadav Safran's Egypt in Search of Political Community was the first study of its kind to systematically break with the conven-

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[35]. Ibid. p. 276.

tional assumptions "Orientalist" scholarship.[36] In this work, Safran showed that the efforts of a generation of liberal political activists in scholars, was not only undermined by the intrinsic difficulties of reinterpreting Islamic doctrine, but also by the pervasive conditions of economic and social inequality that ravaged Egypt in the thirties and forties.

Studies of Islamic modernism in Iran also highlight the close relationship between socio-economic conditions and the fate of modernist Islam. The works of H.E. Chehabi and Said Arjomand both show that the "progressive" version of Islam proffered in the sixties by intellectuals such as Mehdi Barzagan, did not find a wide enough social constituency among Iran's modernized middle classes.[37] On the contrary, the rapid development of Iran's economy in the seventies increased the level of misery among the petit-bourgeois "bazaaris," and other intermediate social groups, who preferred the simplistic vision offered by Khomeini and his ilk over the intellectualist perspective of the modernists.

The above findings have been replicated by quantitative analyses of Muslim fundamentalists. The "profile" of the radical Islamists who shook the political stage in Egypt in the seventies

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[36]. Safran, Egypt in Search of Political Community (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961).

[37]. Said Amir Arjomand, The Turban for the Crown The Islamic Revolution in Iran (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); H.E. Chahabi, Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism, The Liberation Movement of Iran Under the Shah and Khomeini (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

is this: they were mostly unemployed students or malemployed and lower-level bureaucrats of rural backgrounds who had come to Cairo. After receiving a mediocre, (often science-based) that raised their social expectations, they were then employed in useless government jobs which barely allowed them to eke out a living. In short, they constituted a rising, "declasse" elite whose social aspirations were cut off by the specter of economic corruption, moral laxity, and social inequity that characterized Sadat's economic opening or Infitah.[38]

By contrast, some have argued that the growth of an "Islamic bourgeoisie" in Egypt during the eighties created a new social class that was receptive to modernist ideas. After more than 20 years of statist development, this class found in modernism's emphasis on personal freedoms, a useful rationale for economic liberalization and the private property rights.[39] This predisposition was reinforced by the growth interest groups such as professional syndicates, which afforded middle class Islamists an arena through they acquired a taste for democratic politics.[40]

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[38]. See Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Islamic Military as a Social Movement: The Case of Two Groups in Egypt" in Ali Hillal Dessouki, Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World (New York: Praeger, 1982); pp. 117-37. Gilles Kepel, Muslim Extremism in Egypt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[39]. Robert Springborg, Mubarak's Egypt (Boulder: West View Press, 1990.)

[40]. See Robert Bianchi, Unruly Corporatism Associational Life in Twentieth-Century Egypt (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 178-99.

By linking ideology and social change, the materialist approach suggests that ideological change can evolve from within Islamic movements that originally espouse fundamentalist goals. But it also implies that the opposite can happen, as in the case of Algeria. There the preponderant role played by the petite bourgeoisie may have pushed Madani and the moderates within FIS towards a more radical position. However, in both cases the message of materialist analysis is the same: the ideology of a particular group or movement ultimately results from a shifting balance of social power within any society, rather than the "innate" quality of Islam itself.

Economics: The Unique Engine of Change?

The materialist approach offers a critical corrective to the uni-causal idealism of "Orientalist" essentialism. However, in doing so it substitutes one simplistic premise for another. The assumption that there is a one to one correlation between a given Islamic ideology and a given class "interest" is facile; in fact there are a myriad of Islamic ideologies -- as we shall see below -- ideologies which are the products of a complex set of factors.

Moreover, as Khomeini argued, it may be a "Western" fallacy to assume that the economic motive is the primary engine of political activity. Commitment to ideals may override such "rational" motivations; or this commitment may operate on a track that is distinct from economic rationality. This is obvious in the case of Iran, where as Khomeini would say, people did not give up their

lives "for their stomachs." On a less dramatic level, the force of ideals is manifested in the case of Egypt. There the evolution of a capitalist ethic within the Muslim Brethren does not seem to have altered the organization's basic political commitments.[41]

In sum, materialist analysis illuminates a key dimension of political action. But by reducing ideology to economic interest, it fails to delineate how the ideals interacts with a variety of social, political and institutional conditions to produce a myriad of groups and ideologies. The key remaining challenge is to forge a rigorous method of analyzing the richness and diversity of this interactive process so that we can evaluate the prospects for Islamic modernism.

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[41] See below, case study of Egypt, Part Five.

PART FOUR: AN INTERPRETIVE-INTERACTIVE APPROACH

Forging an interpretive-interactive approach requires integrating diverse sets of variables into a theoretical framework to illuminate "causal" relationships. The challenge is to retain a degree of parsimony while accounting for the complexity of political action. In the absence of such a framework, an intepretive approach can amount to little more than a descriptive analysis that is of little predictive value for the analyst attempting to identify potential modernist trends.

To elaborate a theoretically compelling interactive approach I will borrow from the insights of Weberian sociology. I rely, in particular, on Weber's concept of "elective affinity," a concept which I integrate into five models of Islamic political behavior: traditional quietism; gradualist fundamentalism; radical fundamentalism; tactical modernism; and strategic modernism.

Weber, Elective Affinity and Identity

One of the most useful methods for theorizing about the interaction of ideas and socio-political forces derives from Weberian sociology. Weber argued that political behavior is often the unintended result of an "elective affinity" between a cultural "mentality" and socio-economic forces. Where these forces connect in a given historical context, patterns of political behavior emerge that would otherwise not evolve.

Embedded in the concept of "elective affinity" is the premise that cultural mentalities have a logic distinct from economics or

politics. This, Weber suggets, is the logic of "making sense of the world" and one's place in it -- the logic of collective identity.

For Weber, a distinct pattern of political behavior emerges when groups most concerned with forming collective identities adapt their ethical commitments to their specific social environment; the ideology they develop will naturally reflect this process of merging identity with environment. This process can be objective, in that some ideals connect rather easily with certain material conditions. Or it can be subjective, in the sense that groups will deliberately "select out" ideals that help to legitimate their own specific material interest.

To study this process of interlocking "elective affinities" it's necessary to elaborate models or "ideal types" that approximate the most common forms of political behavior in the countries under study.

For example, we can concieve of Islamic modernism as an ideal type of political behavior and/or ideology that has emerged in modern Islamic societies. It is the product of a specific set of material and intellectual forces -- capitalist development, modernist Islamic thought, modernist political or intellectual elites etc.... In the absence of any one of these forces, the probabilities for the emergence of modernist movements is low.

This approach requires an "empathetic" view of the underlying logic or appeal of religious ideals. If we want to understand the social appeal -- or lack thereof-- of modernist Islamic thought,

we must know something about modernism's intrinsic qualities, and compare these qualities to those of fundamentalism.

Islamic Modernism: From Islamic "Ethos" to Islamic "Praxis"

At the heart of the Islamic modernist approach is the premise that there is a basic "ethos" to the Quran. Some modernists, such as Fazlur Rahman, have argued that this ethos can be deduced from a "holistic" reading of the Quran that identifies basic ideals which reappear throughout the Quran.

Others, such as Abdullah Ahmed An-Naim holds that a modern interpretation of the Quran must be based on those suras or chapters of the Quran derived from the early "Meccan" period of the Prophet's life, rather than from the later "Medina" period. The Meccan suras, Naim argues, contain universal principles of justice and tolerance relevant to all men at all times. In contrast, the Medina chapters reflect the more narrow challenges faced by the Prophet in Mecca. Thus, he argued, a truly modernist view must seek inspirations in the universal injunctions spelled out in the Medina suras.[42]

Whatever their differences, both Rahman and Naim agree that in order to identitfy the Quran's underlying "ethos", Muslims must distinguish between the spirit of Islam and the historical documentation of Islam's beginnings. The first can be found in a symbolic, rather than a literalist, interpreation of the Quran.

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[42]. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, Toward an Islamic Reformation (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990).

Let us consider two examples of the modernist method as exemplified by the late Fazlur Rahman. Rahman challenges the fundamentalist view that women are innately inferior to men. Admittedly the Quran says that, "For women there are rights... but men are a degree higher." (2:228). But, he argues, the Quran repeatedly insists that the value of men and women is measured not by the virtue they show through their acts. It is only in this "functional" sense that the Quran distinguishes between men and women, as it does when it states that "men are in charge of women... because men have the liability of expenditure [on women.]" (4:36). Thus, he insists, "if a woman becomes economically sufficient...the male's superiority would... be reduced, since as a human, he has no superiority over his wife."[43]

Rahman makes a similar case regarding the few explicit political injunctions found in the Quran. For example, in his discussion of the concept of shura (consultation), he argues passionately that the term must be understood in terms of the Quran's often-repeated message that it is the umma as a whole which is enjoined to serve as a "median community, that you may be a witness over men." (2:142). There is no subordination of this community to a given leader or Caliph.[44] Thus when the Quran speaks of shura, it commands Muslims to consult among themselves, "in

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[43]. Rahman, Major Themes of the Quran p. 49. This analysis of Rahman's work is informed not only by my reading of that work, but of my exposure to Rahman's teaching at the University of Chicago.

[44]. Rahman, "The Principle of Shura" pp. 88-9.

their common affairs." In a modern context, Rahman insists, the ethos underlying this command can mean nothing less than the institution of competitive democracy.[45]

Modernism and Its Elective Affinities

There are three related elements of modernist thought which appear to have certain "elective affinities" for political and social action. First, the abstract, intellectualist character of modernist methdology is likely to find its strongest appeal among educated groups. Second, its pluralist ethos is likely to find its most receptive audience among Muslims who have been exposed to Western political norms but who desire to express their indentity in Islamic terms. Third, its stress on individual rights is likely to be assimilated by those sectors most fruitfullly engaged in competetive, market-oriented economic activities. In short, modernism should appeal to well educated, gainfully employed middle class groups that have some exposure to Western political ideas.

It should be noted that it is not necessary for all the intricacies of modernist thought to be fully assimilated in order for it to be politically significant. If there exists an intellectual or moral sensibility among a given constituency, and if there exists a means to communicate modernism's themes, then it may have a diffuse yet vital effect by creating a receptivity towards competitive demoracy among those Muslims seeking to reconcile their Muslim identity with their political community.

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[45]. Ibid. p. 95.

Fundamentalism and Its Elective Affinities

The social allure or elective affinity of fundamentalism provides a striking contrast to that of modernism. The common denominator of all fundamentalist ideologies is their appeal to unity over pluralism and difference. This emphasis finds its most effective appeal among urban, lower-middle class or intermediate social groups experiencing the cultural alienation and economic distress that accompanies rapid, uneven socio-economic development. The utopian allure of fundamentalism is often augmented by the rural or traditional roots of intermediate groups. The memory -- or idealization -- of a simple rural life in which the values of family and village solidarity predominate is easily integrated into the fundamentalist concept of reconstituting the Community of Believers or the umma.

Because the "objective" conditions which favor fundamentalism tend to predominate in Third World countries, it is likely that fundamentalism will find a wider base of support than modernism. But the allure of fundamentalism cannot be reduced to social conditions. Fundamentalism enjoys an intrinsic advantage over modernism because it emphasizes ideals of unity and solidarity that are at the heart of orthodox Islamic thought. Moreover, its literalist approach to the Quran is easily comprehended by the common man or woman. Modernist groups must work against these intrinsic advantages -- often in social contexts which make their efforts even more difficult.

4 Ideal Types of Islamic Political Activism

The distinction between fundamentalism and modernism provides a useful starting point for our exploration of Islamic activism. However, in practice there are different forms of fundamentalist and modernist activism in the Islamic world. To provide a conceptual guide to these forms of Islamic activism, I will employ the interactive approach to outline four "ideal types" -- reformist fundamentalism, radical fundamentalism, tactical modernism and strategic modernism.

I introduce each type of Islamic activism with a dicussion of its core ideological attributes. I then identify the social and political conditions that have an "affinity" for this ideology. In each case, I discuss three conditions:

The first condition is that of class or social constituency: here I identify the relative size of that consituency as well as its organizational characteristics. For example, does the ideology have a constituency that is diffuse and fragmented or organized and relatively united?

The second condition is the defining characteristic of the dominant Islamic elites. Here I address two factrors: the type of ideology advocated by the elite; and the elite's institutional relationship to the state and to society. For example, does the

elite have access to or relationships with political parties that support one form of Islamic ideology or another?[46]

The third condition is the nature and level of socio-economic change; here I indicate whether economic development favors middle classes -- both professianol and business -- or more intermediate social groups such as lower-middle class bureaucrats, students, and state workers.[47]

Reformist Fundamentalism

Reformist fundamentalism seeks -- in the long run -- to create an Islamic state in which a single ideology dominates, and in which the injunctions of the Shariah are enforced according to a literalist interpretation of the Quran. Reformists attempt to achieve this goal through a gradual process of legal and educational change that seeks to transform the ideological orientation of society -- instead of radically transforming the ruling political institutions of the state itself. The most effective test of reformist Islam is a demonstrated readiness of Islamic groups to

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[46] This issue is vital because the ability of Islamist groups to provide interepretations of Islam that are not constrained by the interests of the state depend, in part, on their ability to create institutions that are economically and politically autonomous of the state. Autonomy, however, does not necessarily favor a modernist approach. On the contrary, many Sunni fundamentalist groups have tried to organize outside the institutions of the state, and in opposition to the "co-opted" ulema.

[47] Economic change may favor pro-market sectors of the economy while simulatenously promoting other groups which have want to retain state intervent. Certain types of fundamentalism seem to have an elective affinity for this kind of dichatomous economic change.

postpone imposing Islamic law in the absence of what they deem to be sufficient educational or legal reforms within society.

Reformist fundamentalism is promoted by the following conditions:

1) The emergence of a relatively large yet disorganized middle class which includes sectors that are dependent on the state for continued social and economic support.

2) The growth of an organized religious elite which is committed to a fundamentalist ideology; and which has the means to express that commitment through organizations that are relatively autonomous of the state.

3) A moderate pace of economic change that promotes middle class groups which are supportive of market reforms but which nevertheless retain an interest in retaining some elements of a command economy.

Radical Fundamentalism

Radical fundamentalism seeks to topple the entire existing political system in order to establish an Islamic state that is capable of imposing the literal injunctions of the Shariah. The most effective test for radical fundamentalism consists of a demonstrated readiness to use force and violence not only against the ruling elite, but against all Muslims who are deemed to be committed to or tolerant of the existing social-political order.

Radical fundamentalism is promoted by the following conditions:

1) The emergence of a large, urban based lower-middle class which is organized through mosques and other institutions that are relatively autonomous from the state.

2) The emergence of a religious elite which is committed to a radical Islamic ideology and which has the means to

express that commitment through organizations that are relatively autonomous of the state.

3) A rapid and uneven pace of economic development that enlarges the numbers of economically disadvantaged intermediate groups.

Tactical Modernism

Tactical modernism entails the calculated and selective manipulation of liberal democratic norms, or liberal Islamic concepts, as a means to attain power. Tacitcal modernism is designed to attract the temporary support of more moderate-leaning middle classes in the struggle for political power. The three most effective tests of tactical modernism are: one, the absence of any substantive attempt to reinterpret Islamic values, or to adhere to liberal-Islamic themes; two, the readiness to abandon liberal democratic norms when the democratic process does not empower Islamic groups; three, a willingness to abandon liberal democratic norms and procedures after they attain power through democratic procedures.

Tactical modernism is promoted by the following conditions:

1) The emergence of a balance of power between lower-middle and middle class groups that favors the latter but which requires the tactical integration of the former into a political alliance.

2) The emergence of an alliance between fundamentalist and liberal Islamic leaders that favors fundamentalists.

3) A rapid pace of socio-economic change which favors pro-market middle-class groups while punishing economically vulernable intermediate social groups.

Strategic Modernism

Strategic modernism consists of a commitment to liberal democratic norms for their own sake, rather than as a means to gain power. Islamic groups must demonstrate this commitment through their actions and their words. A genuine intellectual commitment to democracy is evidenced either by a substantive effort to reinterpret Islamic norms, or by adherance to the ideas of prominent liberal Islamists. The most effective test of this theoretical commitment consists of a demonstrated readiness to respects the civil rights of all groups, and to relinquish power if subsequent elections should demand alteration in office.

Strategic modernism is promoted by the following conditions:

1) The emergence of a large and well organized middle class with institutional and economic resources that are independent of the state.

2) The emergence of a religious leadership that is committed to modernist ideology and which has the means to communicate that commitment through organizations that are relatively autonomous of the state.

3) A moderate pace of socio-economic change that favors sustained economic growth and efficient markets as well as a minimal level of social equity.

It should be emphasized that the above four types of Islamic activism are not distinct phenomenon. On the contrary, the dynamic and overlapping processes that promotes Islamic activism can engender transformations of ideological orientation from within the womb of Islamic movements. For example, by tempering their ideologies in a bid to accomodate middle class groups, reformist fundamentalists may promote a form of "tactical modernism" from

within their own ranks. Alternatively, by failing to provide solutions to social and economic crises, reformists may encourage their disillusioned followers to create more radical groups.

The nature and extent of such internal transformations depends on the array of social, economic, cultural and political forces interacting in each case. This process of interaction can produce a myriad of transformations which may or may not prove favorable to modernism. What is of particular interest to this study is whether those forces that appear -- on a theoretical level -- to be conducive to modernism, have in practice fostered modernist movements, or promoted a move towards a more modernist ideology from within the ranks of fundamentalist groups.

PART FIVE: A Comparative Analysis Of Islamist Movements and Ideologies

To explore these complex questions I will now employ the interactive approach in a comparative analysis of Islamic activism in the Middle East, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia. Each of the following case studies provides an illustration of the dynamics of change within and between Islamic movements in a given national context.

Egypt offers an example of a well ingrained tradition of reformist fundamentalism. In the seventies and eighties reformist Islam was buffeted by new social and political forces. These forces promoted two trends -- tactical modernism -- as evidenced by the moderation of the Muslim Brethren; and radical fundamentalism -- as evidenced by groups such as Takfir wa al Hijra. Neither group proved strong enough to alter the reform fundamentalist center of Islamic activism. The radicals were politically isolated, while the tactical modernists did not move beyond the stage of manipulating symbols for authoritarian purposes.

Unlike Egypt, Algeria lacks an indigenous tradition of reformist fundamentalism. The absence of such a tradition, combined with a severe socio-economic in the eighties, created a context favorable to the radicalism of Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). During its early stages, when the FIS was trying to gain the support middle class groups as well elements within the National Liberation Front, (FLN) advocates of tactical modernism dominated

the party. Eventually, however, these "moderate" elements adopted a radical position in a effort to shore up support from FIS's mass constituency of impoverished urban youth.

Nigeria offers an introduction to the nature of Islamic activism in the ethnically or tribally heterogenous world of sub-Saharan Africa. We will see that in Nigeria, Islamists have tempered their commitment to a "Wahhabist" Islamic reformism in order to play the consociational political game. However, the rise of sectarian violence has undercut the voices of pragmatism, making the transition back to democracy more difficult.

Malaysia also provides an example of the dynamics of Islamic activism in a context of religious and cultural pluralism. Here, a kind of implicit modernism helped to construct a religious-nationalist ethic that is adhered to by most Islamic groups, and by the ruling elite. Nevertheless, the creation of a more coherent and implicit modernist ideology is yet to be undertaken.

Egypt: The Dynamics of Reformist Fundamentalism

Two intellectual traditions emerged after Egypt's 1919 Revolution: modernist Islam and reformist fundamentalism. The nationalists adopted modernism in an bid to provide a religious basis for their experiment in "liberal" politics. The ulema, led by the most preeminent Islamic thinker of the era Muhammad Abduh, also initially adopted a modernist view of Islam. Their actions demonstrated the extent to which the Egyptian religious elite was linked to the dominant political establishment.

By the thirties however, the intellectuals and party activists who had championed a modernist vision of Islam began to retreat in the wake of a growing fundamentalist movement. That movement was led by the Muslim Brethren, a mass organization established in 1928 by a school teacher named Hassan al-Banna. The rank and file of the Brethren came from the urban petit bourgeoisie -- students, small businessmen, bureaucrats -- a rapidly growing segment of the population. These groups had little access to the parliament because landlords dominated the assembly. Consequently, they streamed into the ranks of extra-parliamentary organizations such as the Muslim Brethren.[48]

By the late forties the Brethren had become a state within a state; it operated it own paramilitary organization, an intelligence unit known as the "secret apparatus," and a national network of interlocking yet separate "cells". It set up its own primary school; dominated the politically active student unions; and made some inroads in the labor unions. It also forged links to the nationalist "Free Officers," a group of middle rank officers who seized power in 1952.

Hassan al-Banna's ideology drew its inspiration from the leading Arab fundamentalist thinker of the time, Rashid Ridda. It spoke to the interests of the economically vulnerable lower-middle class by offering a vision of a revived Community of Believers, an

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[48] Richard Mitchell, The Society of Muslim Brothers (London, 1969).

umma in which the efforts of all would be duly rewarded, and in which none would suffer undo social hardship.

Banna believed that the umma could be reborn through a gradualist program that aimed at creating an "Islamic social system" (Nizam Islami). This transformation of Islamic society would in turn produce an Islamic state. In this sense, Banna's vision combined elements of reformist and radical fundamentalism.

The Brethren tried to create this Islamic System by building institutions within civil society -- schools, self-help groups or "families," medical clinics etc...These efforts were led by lay activists who operated apart from -- and in opposition to -- the Egypt's leading Islamic institution, Al-Azhar University.

Yet Brethren were not opposed to dealing with or influencing formal political institutions. However, they did so by launching campaigns of mass agitation in favor of Islamic law, rather than by participating in political parties. In theory the Brethren rejected multi-party politics, claiming that it provided a forum for the very divisive sects or "ahzab" proscribed by the Quran. This hostility towards party pluralism was a central feature of the Brethren's ideology.

Nevertheless, after heated internal debate, the Brethren did field independent candidates in 2 elections prior to the 1952 coup. This development did not signify a drift towards tactical modernism. The Brethren never adopted any elements of modernist thought, whether for tactical or strategic reasons. Although

inspired by Abduh, they adhered to the ideas of Ridda and Banna.

This orientation may not have satisfied some of the group's leaders, many of whom came from the professional middle classes. But the petit bourgeoisie proved to be the Brethren's most important constituency. Disenchanted by the failure of the ruling elite to enact social reforms, this mass sector pushed the Brethren towards violence, transforming it into a radical fundamentalist party by the late forties.

Gamal Abdel Nasser crushed the Brethren, arresting thousands of its members and hanging several of its theoreticians in the early sixties. From 1954 to 1970 the Brethren constituted an underground organization that had little influence on Nasser's authoritarian regime.

Into the Seventies: Reformist Vs. Radical Islam

When Anwar Sadat became president in 1970, the Brethren reemerged on the political stage. Their rebirth was partly due to Sadat's efforts to weaken the left by tolerating the Brethren. However, the factor which played the most decisive role in the revival of the group was the Brethren's growing links to the middle class.

Sadat's economic opening or infitah made this link process possible. With Saudi investment money and new opportunities for profit-making in real estate, banking and import-export, Egypt's amorphous middle class expanded. As it grew, so did its desire for an indigenous cultural identity with which to express and

legitimize it economic power. The ideal of an umma, in which a minimal level of equality and national unity would be secured through the enforcing Islamic laws and traditions, took hold.

It was in this context of intersecting of ideals and social interests that Umar Talmasani, a veteran Ikhwani[49] and lawyer, solidified the Brethren's reformist program. This program favored the gradual enactment of Shariah as well as the building of an "Islamic system" through education.

However, although the Brethren were supported by elements from the professional and entrepreneurial middle classes, their most powerful base of support rested in the lower middle class. During the seventies, this class expanded more quickly than the ranks of the middle and upper classes, thanks to an economic policy which punished groups on fixed incomes.

The petit bourgeoisie had access to two kinds of organizations which gave them a comparative advantage. "Islamic Societies (jamiyyaat Islamiyya) provided university students with avenues for collective action that were autonomous of the state- controlled student unions. Similarly, independent "popular mosques" offered students, bureaucrats and other groups a means to organize outside the religious establishment. By the end of the seventies these mosques numbered an estimated 40,000.

As the populist base of the Brethren expanded so did the contradiction between this base and the leadership. Eventually, the

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[49] Arabic for "Brother" or "Brethren Member."

tension led to an organizational and ideological rupture.

This rupture was reflected in the emergence of radical fundamentalist groups, known collectively as "Jihad" (Holy War) organizations. These groups took their inspiration from Sayyid Qutb, a radical member of the Brethren who was hung by Nasser in 1964. In his most influential work, Signposts, Qutb advanced the radical and largely unprecedented concept of the "jahaliyya society."[50]

Jahaliyya is the term the Quran uses to refer to the era of "pre-Islamic ignorance" before the Prophet's mission. Qutb gave this term a new and contemporary meaning by implying that all of modern Egyptian society -- rather than the political elite only -- was in a state of jahaliyya. This accusation, which did not figure in the works of Banna or Ridda, had revolutionary implications: it implied that the entire society had committed the sin of apostasy or kuffar, and thus had to be replaced.

The most infamous Jihad group which tried to translate Qutb's ideas into action was the Society of Muslims or Jamaat al-Muslimin. The Society was formed in 1974 by a 31 year old agronomist named Shukri Mustafa. Mustafa's followers were mostly young students who had come from rural hinterland to study or work in Cairo. There they experienced a deep sense of alienation and relative economic deprivation occasioned by the contrasting realities of conspicuous

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[50] Gilles, Kepel, The Prophet and the Pharaoh, Muslim Extremism in Egypt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

wealth and grinding poverty.

Shukri offered a simple yet compelling explanation for this situation -- unbelief. But he took Qutb's ideas one step further by arguing -- in a series of articles -- that the only practical response to jahaliyya was for true Muslims to isolate themselves from society. This process entailed three steps: first, excommunication of society, (takfir); two, physical and intellectual separation (itizal); and finally, at an unspecified time when the group had secured mass support, a full assault on what remained of the jahaliyya society.

Shukri and his followers, who included men and women, adopted his plan, "withdrawing" into apartments in the poor sections of Cairo, Alexandria and other cities. There they attempted to live "in the Prophet's way."

However, as often is the case with extremist sects, dissension over ideological and personal issues was rife in the Society. These disputes led to violence which was then followed by a regime crack down on the Society. In response, the Society kidnapped and murdered the former Minister of Religious Endowments in July 1977. Provoked, the regime proceeded to crush the organization.

Some members of Shukri's allies -- who numbered about 100 -- avoided arrest to surface later in the group of officers who assassinated Sadat in October 1981. All the available evidence, however, suggests that Sadat's killing came about as the result of a series of fortuitous flukes rather than the systematic penetration of the

military by Islamists. The Jihad groups included few military men. Their followers were drawn instead from the ranks of poor students and unemployed professionals.

Into The Eighties: Reformist Islam & Democratic Change

During the eighties, various Jihad groups adopted the radical creed of Qutb and Shukri in vain efforts to stir up Islamic revolution. These groups, which numbered several thousand at any one time, consistently underestimated the power of the state to decimate their ranks by using intelligence forces, intimidation, and brute force.

The Jihad groups also underrated the absence of popular support for their goals and methods -- not only among the general population at large -- but specifically among middle class Islamists. Indeed, The Muslim Brethren attempted to discourage the Islamic radicals by mocking their ideology. In this way, the Brethren played a moderating role in the political arena.

By the mid-eighties, three factors had pushed the Brethren towards greater moderation.

To begin with, under President Hosni Mubarak's rule, the Brethren benefitted from a more open political environment. Although they were not allowed to establish their own political party, they could run newspapers, compete for elected positions in the professional syndicates, and forge alliances with other political parties, a point I will return to below.

Second, the Brethren became a key player in the financial and

commercial bourgeoisie as a result of its close links to an array of small businesses and the powerful "Islamic Investment Firms" (IIF). By offering a system of dividends (instead of interest)[51] that paid higher returns than state regulated interest accounts, the IIFs secured wide support in Egypt's growing middle class. [52]

Third, the Brethren benefitted from a revival within the intelligentsia of interest in liberal Islamic thought. This revival was fed by the works of Islamic modernists such as Zaki Naguib Mahmoud and Muhammad Amara, whose articles were regularly published in the paper of leading liberal party, the New Wafd.

Finally, the institutional development of Egypt's civil society offered advocates of a more liberal Islamic vision an arena for advancing their ideas. For example, in 1985 the prominent modernist-oriented writer, Muhammad Abdel Quddus, was elected to the ruling board of the Journalists Syndicate.[53]

In this favorable social and intellectual climate, the Brethren took a decision which amounted to a watershed for the organization; in 1984, it chose to enter in parliamentary elections by allying with the liberal and largely secular New Wafd party. Moreover, the Brethren's leader implied that this change was

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[51] Islamic law proscribes interest or ribba.

[52] Robert Springborg, Mubarak's Egypt, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990).

[53] See Robert Bianchi, Unruly Corporatism Associational Life in 20th Century Egypt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. 114.

strategic: "Democracy," he declared, "is not a slogan that is raised but is a platform of thinking and a style of life...There is nothing easier than for tyrants to praise freedom."[54]

Yet despite this encouraging statement and others, ensuing events suggested that the Brethren's modernism was tactical. The Brethren did not engage in any efforts to substantively reinterpret Islamic norms; nor did they adopt or seriously engage the ideas of Amara or other Islamic modernists. Indeed, the Brethren admitted that they were postponing, rather than reassessing, their long-standing demand that the Shariah be enforced.

The Brethren's adherence to tactical modernism became clear in 1987, when they abandoned the liberal Wafd in favor of an alliance with the Labor Socialist Party, (LSP) a populist party with pronounced authoritarian past.

The Brethren explained the rationale behind this move with remarkable candor. Their previous alliance had amounted to a "temporary cooperation for a specific operation."[55] Having gained access to the political system, they were now allying with a party that serve their strategic interests. As one Brethren leader put it, the LSP was not only ready to field more Brethren candidates than the Wafd; more importantly, it promised to press for the

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[54] JPRS, NEA-84-014, January, 1984.

[55] "Background of Muslim Brethren-New Wafd Alliance," JPRS, NEA-84-122, 8 August, 1984.

application of Islamic law.[56]

Hamid Abu al-Nasr -- chosen "Supreme Guide" of the Brethren following Talmasani's death in February 1987 -- candidly articulated what the Brotherhood meant by the "application of Shariah." Everything that contracted "the spirit of Islam and its lofty law" was a crime, Nasr insisted.[57] Echoing these words, other Brethren leaders insisted that the government make "every state official...account for his personal behavior if it is contrary to Islamic laws," as well as prevent the publication of anything "contrary to the spirit of Islam."[58]

Conclusion

The Egyptian cases offers powerful evidence that the forces which induce fundamentalist groups to adopting temperate slogans do not necessarily produce a substantive transformation in favor of strategic modernism. Although the Brethren developed an "objective" interest in a market economy, there was no "spill over effect" from economic to political liberalism. On the contrary, the Brethren's devotion to a vision of an Islamic state unified by a common commitment to an infallible law remained as robust in 1987 as it was in 1940.

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[56] "Muslim Brotherhood Leader Interviewed," JPRS, NEA-87-054, 13 May, 1987.

[57] "Muslim Brothers Instruct President on Foreign, Domestic Affairs," JPRS NEA-87-058, 22 May, 1987.

[58] "Muslim Leader Addresses "Open Letter" to Mubarak, JPRS, NEA-87-033, 19 March, 1987.

Having said this, it must be emphasized that after their brief flirtation with tactical modernism, the Brethren resumed their "reformist" tradition. Caught between radical Islamists pushing for revolutionary change and ruling elites pushing to eliminate the Islamists, the Brethren preferred a process of gradual transformation that accommodated, rather than tried to forcefully transcend, the realities of Egyptian society.

Algeria: The Fleeting Victory of Radical Islam

Algeria's experience of Islamic activism sets it apart -- not only from Egypt and the Arab world, but also from its North African neighbors. Algeria's most prominent Islamic movement, The Association of Ulema, played a vital part in the independence movement by forging an ideology that linked nationalism and religion. But it never created a coherent vision of an Islamic political order. After independence, the state co-opted the leaders of the Society, as well as all other organized Islamic groups. This policy left a political vacuum that was latter filled by a radical Islamist trend when President Chadli Benjedid began his political opening in 1978.

This experience also contrasts with that of Tunisia, Libya and Morocco. Tunisia's most prominent Islamist movement, Al-Nahda, was inspired directly by the reformist fundamentalism of Egypt's Muslim Brethren. As in Egypt, Nahda emerged from within civil society, and in opposition to the state co-opted ulema. Meanwhile, in Libya and Morocco, the most significant forms of political Islam emerged from

above, from within the state. King Hassan rules Morocco as "Commander of the Faithful," as a religious leader who claims the right to interpret the Quran by virtue of his family's professed lineage to the Prophet. Libya's Muammar Khaddafi makes no such claim; but he too has tried to monopolize the language and institutions of Islam in a bid to portray himself as defender of Islam's basic ideals.

In short, unlike its neighbors in North Africa and the Middle East, Algeria lacks a deeply institutionalized tradition of Islamic political activism, whether from below or from above. But it was this very unique situation -- the absence of credible Islamic alternatives -- that allowed radical Islam to suddenly filled a political vacuum in the late eighties.

Islam as "Ethnic Nationalism"

The Association of Ulema (A.O.U.) played a decisive role in Algeria's struggle for independence. It was formed in 1931 by Ben Badis (1889-1940), an Islamic scholar who was born to a wealthy, pro-French, Berber family in Costantine. Rejecting his family's secular-European orientation, Badis took a degree in religious studies at Tunis's Zitouna Islamic University. Henceforth, he devoted his life to uniting Algeria's ulema around the struggle to fuse nationalism and Islamic identity into a potent weapon against the French. Badis called this form of identity "ethnic nationalism."[59]

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[59] Jean-Claude Vatin, L'Algerie Politique Histoire et Societe (Presses de la Fondation Nationale Des Sciences Politiques, 1983), pp. 187-99.

The A.O. U.'s adoption of Badis' concept of ethnic nationalism left a profound mark on the nature and development of Algerian Islamic activism which is still felt today. Although influenced by the modernist ideas of Egypt's Muhammad Abduh and by the reformist fundamentalist views of Rashid Ridda, the A.O.U. focused primarily on creating a nationalist-religious identity. This focus did not allow for the systematic linking of religious values to the practical issues of political organization.

The absence of a comprehensive and indigenous political doctrine facilitated the FLN's co-optation of both Islamic ideas and Islamic activists following independence in 1960. In the ensuing twenty years, the ulema became paid employees of the state's Ministry of Religious Affairs. The Ministry, some of whose directors had been members of the A.O. U, championed a form of "Islamic secularism," in which Islamic themes were selectively invoked to legitimate Algerian national identity.

This policy failed. The evocation of Islamic identity did not, in and of itself, unite Algeria's fragmented society. Berber Muslims -- a non-Arab Sunni Muslim minority which constitutes some 15% of the population -- rejected Islamic identity in favor of

The gap between orthodox expectations and secular reality fused with widespread discontent over economic conditions to create an explosion of radical Islam. Riots at Algiers University in 1982 were followed by uprisings in other universities. Once again, the utopian ideal of a Brotherhood of Believers became a potent rallying cry for groups whose hopes for social change had given way to bitter disillusionment.[60]

In 1988, this disillusionment exploded once again in a series of urban riots which quickly took on the proportions of a national rebellion. President Benjedid responded to these events with a bold political opening designed to attract support from for an ambitious economic reform program.

The Rise of Islamic Activism

The first independent Islamic groups to emerge following Benjedid's political reforms were the Islamic Call and the Movement for Reform and Guidance. Led by religious scholars who favored a modernist ideology, these organizations emphasized social change through renewed Islamic education and they did not take a direct role in politics. In fact, they lobbied against creating official Islamic parties, insisting that the Islamic movement stay above the political fray.

The reluctance to organize political parties did not follow, however, simply from ideological concerns. It also resulted from

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[60] John Entelis, Algeria, The Revolution Institutionalized (Boulder: West View Press, 1986).

a strategic calculation by the organizations' leaders that they lacked a strong social base. Groups such as the Movement for Reform and Guidance (MRG) relied on support from the small and politically fragmented middle class. Moreover, some of their leaders came from a religious elite that had been tainted by its association with the FLN. Given these circumstances, the MRG and Dawa were poorly placed to compete for popular support.

In March 1989 a new group emerged to fill the political vacuum -- the Islamic Salvation Front or FIS. Unlike the existing mainstream Islamic organizations, FIS had a large urban constituency among poor students and malemployed government workers. This constituency had the advantage of both numbers and organization; during the eighties, its members flocked to the independent popular mosques that had been proliferated in the poor quarters of Algiers and other large cities.

However, while the FIS's main base of support came from the petit bourgeoisie, it's leaders tried to forge links with the middle class as well. This effort to speak to two constituencies at once resulted in a division of labor within FIS's leadership. On the one hand were the radicals who evoked the utopian ideal of the Islamic state before the impoverished urban masses. On the other hand were the pragmatists who employed the language of modernism in a effort to gain the support of middle class groups.

The radical group was represented by Ali Belhadj, the deputy leader of the FIS. A 37 year old preacher with no exposure to

Western values or traditions, Belhadj argued that Algeria's social crisis stemmed from the introduction of the "corrupting" values of Western civilization:

> You tell us that you have no lesson of religion to give to anyone. Where is your religion when you let men and women mix scandalously in the offices, schools and factories. When you leave the cinemas, bars and cafes open in the middle of Ramadan...When you let the televisions broadcast...scandalous images which pervert our brothers, sisters and children...[61]

Belhadj asserted that this crisis could only be remedied by the immediate creation of an Islamic state. By applying the laws of God, this state would restore Algeria its "intrinsic" unity. Consequently, there was no room for political parties or ahzab -- which fragmented Algerian society -- or for democracy. "One does not vote for God," he declared, "one obeys him."[62]

Belhadj's fiery rhetoric contrasted with the more temperate language of FIS's leader, Dr. Abbasi Madani. A 53 year old academic with a Ph.D. in education from London University, Madani articulated a vision Islam in which the exigencies of Islamic law were superficially reconciled to the ideals of pluralism. For example, both prior to and after Algeria's June 1990 municipal and provincial elections, Madani affirmed the value of pluralism:

> My brother, how can we not coexist with each other and how can we not complement each other and why do we not help each other when God says: Help ye one another in

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[61]. Le Point, April 30, 1990, "Islamism en Algerie: La Guerre Sainte Contre L'Etat," pp. 38-44.

[62]. L'Express, "L'avenir Voile," June 17, 1990. Also see Le Nouvel Observateur, June 21-27, 1990.

> righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancor and in disobeying the Prophet.[63]
>
> Why is it necessary to have pluralism? Because one must have what is necessary to have opposition. It existed during the time of the orthodox Caliphs, so why not have it now...Pluralism is necessary for political development because we are not angels. We are right sometimes, and make mistakes other times...Therefore pluralism must be permitted.[64]

Yet while Madani's statements were imbued with some modernist themes, he did not advocate a coherent modernist ideology. Madani never endorsed the notion that pluralism entails the expression of many truths. Instead, he implied that pluralism and opposition are functionally "necessary" procedures by which the community forges a consensus regarding the one true application God's immutable laws. In fact, he insisted, pluralism does permit "sin and rancor and disobeying the Prophet."

The authoritarian logic underlining Madani's concept of pluralism was not readily apparent to many Algerians. On the contrary, his tactical modernism contributed to FIS's victory in the June elections.[65] Subsequently, however, two developments pushed Madani to abandon his moderate stance in favor of an explicitly radical position.

First, FIS's victory encouraged other Islamic groups to jump

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[63]. "FIS Chairman Holds News Conference. FBIS NES 90-008 January 11, 1990.

[64]. See "Islamic Front Outlines Plans," Interview with Madani in Al-Watan June 22, 1990. In FBIS NES 90-124, June 27, 1990.

[65] FIS won two-third of the 48 regional assemblies and 55% of the 1,541 municipal councils.

into the political arena. One such organization was Al-Nahda, a reformist-fundamentalist group which advocated policies similar to those of Egypt's Muslim Brethren. The other was Hamas, which in contrast to Al-Nahda, advocated a position that combined elements of modernism and reform fundamentalism. Its leader, Sheikh Mafoud Nahnah, argued that

> An Islamic party...must accept the play of arguments [since] an Islamic party is nothing more than...a movement which confronts other political movements. If the Islamic party comes to communicate with other parties, this means that it has assimilated the rules of the political game, and if it fails this is not the fault of Islam...We are not afraid of democracy if it is the expression of the majority and not an attempt to stifle public opinion.[66]

Nahnah's decision to create Hamas represented an about-face. As leader of the Movement for Reform and Guidance, he had previously opposed the creation of Islamic political parties. But with the apparent prodding of the FLN, he forged an alliance of some 300 Islamic associations in a effort to challenge FIS's control of the Islamic movement.

Madani's response to this decision exposed his authoritarian proclivities. Despite his professed support for pluralism, and despite his previous promise that FIS would not "monopolize Islam," he now made it clear that he would tolerate no challenges to FIS's hegemony. "Anyone who wants unity," he insisted, "should join our

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[66] See Daniel Brumberg, "Islam, Elections and Reform in Algeria" Journal of Democracy Vol. 2, No. 2, (Winter 1991) p.67 Nahnah also insisted that "a pone-party system with an Islamic party would be a dictatorship. The antidote to sclerosis of the mind is a multi-party system." L'Express, 22 March 1991.

ranks for the establishing of an Islamic state."[67]

However, the pivotal development that pushed Madani towards an extreme position was the rapid politicization of Algerian society occasioned by the Gulf War. FIS's radicals exploited the war against a "fraternal Islamic country" in a bid to galvanize the urban masses. Fearing this tactic would enable FIS to sweep parliamentary elections scheduled for June 1991, the regime issued a new election that favored the FLN's rural constituencies. Madani responded by calling for a general strike, an act which promptly led to the postponement of elections and to the arrest of Madani, Belhadj and some 5000 FIS supporters.

Conclusion

The crisis prompted by the Gulf war accentuated the fundamental "structural" dilemma facing the FIS: the more it secured public support, the more it had to speak to the party's primary constituency of poor urban youths. FIS faced this dilemma from the moment of its inception; the Gulf War simply accelerated its effects by creating circumstances that obliged Madani to make a choice between tactical modernism and radical fundamentalism.

Following the arrest of Madani and Belhadj, a split emerged within FIS' ruling council. More moderate leaders such as Shaykh Bashir Faquih and Shaykh Muhammad Imam denounced Madani's call for a general strike, while the radicals demanded that Madani and Belhadj be freed.

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[67] Brumberg,"Islam, Elections," p. 68.

Eventually the leadership of FIS fell to Abdelkader Hachani, who wisely adopted a more moderate tone in advance of elections, the first round of which were rescheduled for December 1991.

However, FIS could not escape the logic of circumstances. The affinity between its core ideology and Algeria's severe economic crisis -- in the absence of significant Islamic alternatives -- created an irresistible force; by the eve of elections, FIS' followers were proclaiming in the streets, "No Constitution and no Law. The Only rule is the Quran and the law of God." This slogan brought FIS victory for one fleeting moment, before the military intervened to put end to Algeria's ambitious experiment in democratic politics.

Viewed from a from a pragmatic point of view, one can argue that Algeria would have been better off had an indigenous fundamentalist group such as the Muslim Brethren of Egypt existed. For even if reformists are ultimately committed to authoritarian goals, their gradualist approach to political change, combined with their links to the political establishment, incline them to oppose the revolutionary orientation of "masses."

Nigeria: Reformist Fundamentalism In a Multi-Ethnic Society

In the Arab Middle East and North Africa, Islamists operate in contexts which from a religious point of view are largely homogeneous. Sunni and/or Shiite Muslims form a majority in all the states of both regions. There are important ethnic minorities in Morocco, Algeria, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon as well as religious

minorities in Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. But in general Islamists can rightly claim that they speak for "Muslim" societies.

This claim does not justify, from a normative point of view, the imposition of a monolithic Islamic order. The assumption that democracy equals the right of the majority to impose its will on the minority -- ie. upon Muslims who do not subscribe to Islamic orthodoxy -- is one that by nearly all fundamentalists share. Pluralism may have a role to play; but as Madani implies, its purpose is limited to ascertaining the one "Truth" that all must submit to. This is why pluralism can serve as a vehicle for imposing an authoritarian political order.

When we turn to Sub-saharan Africa, however, the picture is different. In this region, some 40% of Muslims live in states in which they constitute large minorities rather than majorities. Moreover, these states are often divided along both religious and ethnic-tribal lines, with ethnicity often serving as a more powerful locus of political identity than religion.

Given these circumstances, Muslim activist groups are frequently poorly positioned to advance their ultimate goals, particularly through democratic means. Instead, they must accommodate their theoretical commitments to the ideal of the umma to the reality of ethnic and religious pluralism.

The logic of pragmatism has guided the most influential Islamic activist group in Nigeria, the Izala. While devoted to an orthodox, "Wahhabite" type of reformist fundamentalism, Izala has -

- in practice and to some extent in theory as well -- adapted its convictions to the exigencies of regional politics.

This approach has not engendered a modernist ideology from within the womb of Izala; on the contrary, in Northern Nigeria where Muslims form a majority, Izala has often tried to impose its vision on groups that do not share its convictions, such as the mystical Sufi orders. Moreover, it has attempted to dominate to the political system through its links to the national political institutions. However, Izala has not challenged the fundamental "rules of the game" that define Nigerian politics.

The recent upsurge of sectarian fighting may have changed this equation by strengthening the power of Izala's popular base. Whether the more radical groups could profit from such a change is an issue I will address at the end of this section.

To appreciate the roots and ideology of Izala, we will have to first briefly trace the nature and development of Islam in Nigeria. This accomplished, we will analyze the Izala movement, as well as its competitors.

The Institutionalization of Islamic Orthodoxy in North Nigeria

Nigeria is inhabited by some 95 million people who live in a patchwork of religious and tribal groups. The north is dominated by the Hausas-Fulanis, the southeast by Ibos, and the southwest by the Yoruba. The Hausa-Fulani, Yaruba and Ibo groups are the biggest of some 200 ethnic groups in the country. However, the major political cleavage runs along religious lines, between Muslim Hausa-Fulanis

who constitute 45% population, and the Christian Ibos, who constitute a slightly higher proportion.[68]

Although the Islamic religion has a presence in Nigeria that dates back to the 11th century, it first assumed political form in the 1500's, when the tribal leaders of Hausaland united under the banner of Islamic law. The Fulanis of West Africa then settled Hausaland, vigorously adopting Islam and spreading it throughout Northern Nigeria. At the close of the 18th century, their most prominent leader, Shehu Usumanu dan Fodio, fought a jihads or Holy War that creating the Sokoto Caliphate -- only independent Islamic state in West Africa.

When the British colonized Nigeria in the middle of the 19th century, they transformed the emirs of Northern Nigeria into political clients through a system of "Native Authorities." This "modernization" of Northern Nigeria's Islamic political elite led to the creation of the "Northern Peoples Congress" (NPC), under the leadership of Sir Ahmedu Bello.

Consociational Politics: From First Republic to Military Coup

The political system which emerged following the 1959 elections was designed to regulate ethnic and religious competition through regional assemblies that coexisted in tandem with the national parliament. Provincial assemblies were given considerable autonomy, although the federal government retained power over the

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[68] The Yoruba are about evenly divided between Christian and Muslims. But tribal identity, rather than religion, been the major factor in the political conflicts that have affected the Yoruba.

military and foreign affairs. Direct elections for the national assembly did reinforce the ethnic struggle for power. However, because no one group could get a majority, the logic of the system obliged Nigeria's various groups to accommodate each other through bargaining and forging of political alliances.

The NPC agreed to respect this consociational arrangement when it formed a coalition government following the 1959 elections. However, while the party's leader, Ahmadu Bello, accepted the rules of the game, he was also determined to make the PNC -- and hence Northern Nigeria -- the dominant force in Nigerian politics. Towards this end, he set about a policy of unification directed at two groups: the dominant political elite, consisting of the landed aristocracy, royal families and ulema on the one side; and two Sufi brotherhoods, the Darika, Tijaniyya and the Qadiriyya.[69]

The Saudis backed Bello both politically and economically. In the early sixties they appointed him vice-resident of the World Muslim League. At the same time, they poured money into mosques, hospitals, schools and infrastructure.

However, Saudi patronage complicated matters for Bello. The Saudis expected him to imitate the strictures of "Wahhabi" Islam by repressing what they deemed to be the "non-Islamic" innovations associated with the practice of mystical Sufi-Islam. Such a policy

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[69] Ousmane Kane, "Mouvement urbain et Islam reformiste au Nord-Nigeria: le cas de la Jamaat Izala" Paper prepared for the Conference, Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements," American Academy of Arts and Science, Chicago, Illinois, November 5, 1990.

would have ruined Bello's unification project.

Bello tried to balance these conflicting pressures. On the one hand, he created the "Jammat Nasr al-Islam," (The Society for the Victory of Islam), a Saudi-financed missionary organization that tried to convert Christians to Islam. At the same time, he created a federation to unite the two leading Sufi brotherhoods behind the religious establishment.

This balancing act proved relatively successful. Over time a distinctive form of Islam "from above" emerged, one in which elements of state-supported Wahhabi reformist fundamentalism coexisted with a degree of Islamic pluralism.

However, while Bello's Islamic policies were unique to the Islamic world, they indirectly contributed to reinforcing sectarian tensions by encouraging the North to aggressively assert itself on the political field. Fearing the effects of Northern-Muslim hegemony, a group of military officers of Ibo-Christian origin undertook a violent coup in January 1966. This coup not only put an end to Bello's life, but also to Nigeria's constitutional government for more than a decade.

The Rise of Orthodox Reformist Fundamentalism -- The "Izala"

During the ensuing 12 years, a combination of political, intellectual, and socio-economic forces transformed Bello's eclectic ideological legacy. By the late seventies a new movement, shorn of Bello's tolerance for Islamic diversity, had emerged.

This development resulted in part from the political vacuum

created by the 1966 coup and those that followed. In the absence of political parties, a variety of extra-parliamentary groups and charismatic leaders filled the political space. One such leader was Mahmoud Gumi, an Islamic intellectual who worked closely with Bello since the early sixties.

Unlike Bello, Gumi was a zealous advocate of Wahhabist fundamentalism, having spent time studying in Saudi Arabia where he forged close ties to the Saudi regime. Bello's death gave him with the chance to fully express his puritanical views. Beginning in the early seventies, Gumi launched a bitter campaign in the press and radio against the Sufi brotherhoods. This campaign gave way to an ideological civil war between Gumi and the Islamic establishment on one side, and the Sufi orders on the other.

The political effects of this intellectual war were magnified by the radical transformation of Nigeria's economy during the seventies. Oil boom growth brought about a vast relocation of economic and social resources to cities. This transformation created an affinity for Gumi's ideology among two social groups.

The first group consisted of businessmen and politicians who benefitted directly from the oil boom, and specifically from their ties with Saudi Arabia. By the mid-seventies, this group had practically replaced the traditional elite of emirs and royal families that had previously dominated political life in Northern Nigeria. But it needed a populist ideology to mobilize the people, particularly in light of the renewal of competitive party politics

that took appeared on the horizon in 1977. Gumi's orthodox version of reform fundamentalism provided that ideology.

The second group which developed an affinity for Gumi's Islamic vision were the "new intellectuals" of the urban centers. This group emerged with the investment of oil-generated funds in a new generation of secondary Islamic schools such as the School of Arabic Studies in Kano. These institutions offered their students a more modern curriculum, without giving them the tools to find suitable employment. Upon graduating, these students found their hopes dashed by the hardships of inflation, corruption, economic inequality and urban decay. In this context of disillusionment and social malaise, they easily took to Gumi's puritanical vision of a renewed Islamic brotherhood in which social unity and equity would prevail.

Following an unsuccessful attempt on his life in 1978, Gumi united the above two social groups behind a new organization which he called the "Movement for the Suppression of Innovation and the Establishment of Tradition," (Jammat Izalat al-bida wa iqamat al-Sunna or Izala).

Izala quickly evolved in a region wide organization presided over by two key committees. The Committee of Ulema consisted of leaders drawn from the traditional religious elite of Kano and other cities. The Committee of Patrons included prominent businessmen and politicians. The president of the Patron Committee was Alhaji Muhammad Musa Mai Gandu, a member of the National Party of

Niger (NPN) -- the successor to the NPC. His position epitomized the close relationship between the NPC and Izala.

Below this official structure emerged a "parallel Izala movements" made up of young urban students and government workers. This movement consisted of various independent associations and groups that maintained informal links to the parent organization.

The Ideology of Izala -- Between Orthodoxy and Pragmatism

In many respects, Izala replicated the basic tenets of Wahhabi fundamentalism. It called for the abolition of all intellectual innovation or "bida" that was not in strict conformity with the ideals of the Quran. Moreover, it condemned all political institutions and ideas designed to substitute for God's sovereignty as acts of Shirk or "associationism," an unpardonable sin in Islam.

In theory this ideology demanded a radical assault on almost all the prevailing secular political institutions. However, Izala had been created by a political and economic elite which defended its interests by working through -- rather than against -- the political order. The victory of the NPN in the 1979 national elections that inaugurated the Second Republic -- in addition to Izala's victory in 7 out of 19 provincial elections -- reinforced the logic of pragmatism.

This logic led Izala's leaders to moderate, both theoretically and practically, their political agenda. In principle the group was committed to the ideal of an Islamic state and expressed this

commitment by lobbying, during the 1977 constitutional debates, for the application of Shariah. Yet Izala's leaders did not call for an Islamic state. As one leader put it, "The Prophet Muhammad did not attack Mecca at the start of his mission, rather he was content to call the people to embrace Islam."[70]

During the next four years of NPN domination of Nigerian politics, Izala adhered to this reformist-fundamentalist line. Although it rejected the eclectic pluralism of Bello, Izala stuck to the rules of the political game by using democracy as a means to defend the rights of Muslim Nigerians, rather than as a weapon to impose its views on other ethnic groups.

Islamic Radicalism in an Era of Religious Polarization

This first manifestations of radical Islam in Nigeria date back to the early sixties, when a small political party, the North Elements Progressive Union, (NEPU), began a campaign for social reforms in support of lower-middle class Muslims. NPEU's followers -- the largely rural "talakawa" and urban "leburori," -- were inspired by the writings of Mallam Amino Kano, an intellectual who tried to fuse Islamic and Fabian-socialist thought. [71]

Radical Islam was later manifested in messianic movements such as the "Tan Tastine." This movement was led by a charismatic

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Paul Lubeck, "Islamic Political Movement in Nigeria: The Problem of Class Analysis," in Edmund Burke, et. a., Islam, Politics and Social Movements (Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, 1988).

preacher, Alhaji Muhammad Marawa. In the late seventies Marawa gather around him a following of rural migrants and vagabonds who migrated on a seasonal basis to the cities where they studied Quran. In 1980, a violent riot took place Kano following the attempts by the Tan Tastine to take over mosques attached to the Izala. The authorities crushed the movement, but not before some 10,000 Nigerians had died.

Although the above groups made a mark on the political landscape of Nigeria, they lacked the organizational resources and social base necessary to effectively challenge the dominant Islamic organizations. However, in the early eighties a new and more powerful generation of radical Islamic groups emerged.

This trend was partly sparked by Iran's Islamic Revolution. But its root cause lay in the devastating effects of the oil-glut. Nigeria's economy, which was almost totally reliant on oil exports, fell into deep recession following the collapse of the oil market. The recession exacerbated Muslim-Christian relations as each side vied for the declining resources of the state. Sectarian conflict was also reinforced by the growth of Christian fundamentalist groups such the Christian Association of Nigeria. This volatile mixture of religious organization and economic decline led to an explosion; in October 1982, students from the School of Arabic Studies in Kano burned down several Christian churches, thus marking the beginning of a new and more violent age of sectarian conflict in Nigeria.

Eventually these events led to the break-down of the national political system in late 1982. Following parliamentary elections that were fraught by vote fraud and violence, General Mahmaddau Buhari staged a coup. Three years later he was replaced in another coup staged by General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida.

However, the imposition of authoritarian government did not stop the growth of Islamic radicalism. On the contrary, it probably encouraged this phenomenon by creating a political vacuum which was then promptly filled by a myriad of radical groups.

These groups derived their support from the very social sectors that formed the mass social base of Izala -- students, mal-employed civil workers and the like. But in contrast to Izala, the radicals sought to translate the former's orthodox commitments into reality. They expressed this commitment by violently imposing their views on the Sufi Islamic orders, and by attacking rival Christian groups. In 1987, this unyielding approach led to bloodshed between Islamic and Christian groups at Kafanchan's Advanced Teachers College. This event led to similar outbreaks of sectarian violence in six other towns.

The Muslim students of Kafanchan were led by the Muslim Students Society, (MSS) and organization that had gone through a process of radicalization early eighties. In the late eighties, internal schisms in the MSS led to the creation of two break away organizations: the pro-Saudi Dawah (The Call) led by Aminudeen bubakar, and pro-Iranian Umma. The former proved more successful

than the latter because of its ties to he Saudis and the general lack of support for Shiite concepts of clerical rule within Nigeria's Sunni population.[72]

The aspirations of the radical student were articulated by a university lecturer, Ibrahim Sulieman. Sulieman portrayed himself as an authentic ideological heir to Fadio, the "jihadist" who established the Sokoto Islamic Caliphate. Adhering to Wahhabist orthodoxy, Sulieman refused to recognize the legitimacy of the modern Nigerian state.[73] In sharp contrast to the reformist fundamentalists, he insisted that all Nigerians be forced to adopt Islam -- the one true and universal religion for mankind.

Radicalism and the Dilemmas of Democratization

During the mid-eighties reformist fundamentalists responded to the radicals with a number of initiatives designed to undercut the latter's appeal. Izala hoped that this effort would restore calm prior to the convening, in 1988, of a Constituent Assembly charged with the task of forging a new constitution.

In an effort to undercut their appeal among students, Izala created rival student groups such as the Gamji Memorial Club. It also held talks with leaders of the Sufi order, in the hope that such talks would both unite the Islamic community and thus steal

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[72] Jibrin Ibrahim, "Religion and Political Turbulence in Nigeria, " The Journal of Modern African Studies 29, no. 1 (199) pp. 115-136.

[73] John Voll, "Religion and Politics in Islamic Africa," in Matthew Moen and Lowell Gustafson, The Religious Challenge to the State, (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1992)pp.209-235.

the wind from the radical's sails.[74]

Izala's efforts met with only modest success. In the late eighties and early nineties, Nigeria witnessed more outbursts of violence between rival Muslim groups as well as between rival Christian and Muslim groups. These outbursts occurred against the back-drop of the emotionally charged debate over Shariah that unfolded in the Constituent Assembly. Izala, despite its earlier efforts to undercut the radicals, heightened tensions by supporting pro-Shariah forces.

Citing the persistence of sectarian conflicts, and determined to prevent a reassertion of "old" political system that he claimed fed these conflicts, President Babangida's proposed a tightly controlled process of re-democratization that explicitly excluded most of the old political parties.

Conclusion

It is unlikely that this proposal will work given the realities of Nigerian society. Yet a return to the old consociational system seems out of the question. In short, Nigeria is at an impasse.

Several related factors will make it difficult for Nigeria to extract itself from this quandary. The collapse of its economy has obliged the regime to undertake an austerity program that has imposed its great costs on those groups most prone to religious

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[74] The talks were held in January 1988, but broke down within several months.

radicalism. But Izala appears unwilling or unable to forge a more tolerant vision of Islam that will inspire the youth to abandon radical Islam. In fact, it's support for the application of Shariah only emboldened the radicals. Under these twin conditions of economic deprivation and intellectual rigidity, there is little chance that a modernist trend will emerge to point Nigeria in new directions.

Malaysia -- Accommodating Islam and (Malay) Nationalism

The "consociational" arrangement that provided an imperfect foundation for Nigeria's turbulent political life functioned as long as no one group tried to impose its religious or ethnic identity on the other. In this sense, Nigerian "nationalism" was premised on the absence of a nationalist ideology.

Malaysia's political system has also been shaped by the realities ethnic-religious pluralism. Since independence in 1957, ethnic Malays -- who are Sunni Muslims -- comprise half of the population, while the Chinese minority, which is Buddhist, and Indian-Pakistani minority, which is mostly Christian, account for 37% and 11% of the population respectively.[75] In parts of Malaysia, particularly in the towns and cities of the West coast states, "minorities" outnumber "majority" Malays. This situation has encouraged the Islamists to practice a degree of political and social accommodation.

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[75] Malaysia has an estimated population of 15 million.

However, in contrast to Nigeria -- where no one group has been able to advance a nationalist ideology -- Malaysia's Muslims have tried to affect an accommodation between Islam and Malaysian national identity. Malaysia's ruling party, the United Malays National Organization, (UNMO), its most vociferous opponent, the Partai Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS), and the most powerful Islamic association, the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement, (ABIM), have all attempted in different ways, and to different degrees, to reconcile "Malay" nationalism with a more universal, Islamic identity -- without at the same time denying the pluralistic character of Malaysian society.

Over time, this process of reconciliation between competing identities favored an Islamic orientation. The process of "Islamization" was in fact accelerated in the late seventies by the government, which tried to co-opt the ideologies and leaders of the ABIM. However, the Islamic ideologies of all the main players -- at least until recently have -- have pivoted around an ideological center in which elements of reformist fundamentalism and modernism have been blended together to accommodate Malaysia's pluralistic society. This process has facilitated the operation of a "limited competitive democracy" in which Islamic parties have contributed to a degree of political openness.

The Early Years: Islam and Nationalism in Opposition

Although Islam has been a force in Malaysia since the foundation of the Malacca Sultanate in 1401, Islam as a political force

is of recent vintage, dating back to the early 1970s. Prior to this time, several Islamic groups had existed without exercising much influence on society. These groups included the largely apolitical Jamaat Tabligh,[76] which was brought to Malaysia by missionaries from India in the fifties; and the much more activist Darul Arqam, which established by a religious teacher (ustaz), Ahsari Muhammad. The organization was extremely radical and doctrinaire by Malaysian standard, insisting that an Islamic state be created in advance the of "Islamization" of society. In addition there was one formal Islamic political party, the "Pan Malay Islam Party," (est. 1951), about which we will have more to say below.[77]

The above groups did not have much impact on the Malaysian political scene during the sixties. Instead, the political arena was dominated by two tendencies.

The ruling establishment was represented by the Malay-based UNMO and its two coalition partners, the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) and the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA). In the early fifties these three parties formed a coalition based on an implicit agreement whereby the UNMO obtained political posts for ethnic Malays while MIC and MCA received privileged positions in the business community, as well as a guarantee of religion freedom.

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[76] The Talibgh was founded in India.

[77] Nash, Manning. "Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia and Indonesia," Fundamentalisms Observed, (A.A.A.S., "Fundamentalism Project, Chicago, 1991). pp. 691-739.

The UMNO and its allies were opposed by a number of political parties and associations made up of professionals, students, and some small businessmen. Among the most important of these groups were "The University of Malay Malaysian Language Society," which by Anwar Ibrahim; and the Pan Malay Islamic Party. The first group was more nationalist and "Malay" in orientation, while the second advocated a more Islamic position.

Until 1970, the balance of ideological and political power rested in the hands of the ruling coalition. But in the ensuing decade, a number of domestic and international developments engendered the rise of Islamic activism, first from within civil society itself, and then from within the state.

Economic Development, The Dakwah Movement & the Rise of the ABIM

The rise of the Islamic movement in Malaysia -- popularly referred to as the "Dakwah," (from the Arabic word, "call"), can be traced to Chinese-Malay riots of May 13, 1969. The riots were sparked when supporters of the opposition party took to the streets to celebrate the electoral defeat of the ruling coalition. The riots left hundreds dead, and the "old system" in ruins.

The UNMO responded to the riots in two ways. On the political front, it declared a state of emergency, imposing a "National Operations Council" which ruled until the restoration of parliament in February 1971. On the economic front, it announced the "New Economic Policy," a policy which was implicitly directed at improving the economic fortunes of the Malay population.

The New Economic Policy, reinforced by Arab Gulf investment money, transformed Malaysia. The expansion of the universities, combined with the growth of business and industry, pulled tens of thousands of Malaysians into the cities. By the mid-seventies, an expanded middle class, consisting of young, university educated Malays, occupied the center of the political and social stage.[78]

As elsewhere in the Islam world, it was this new middle class which turned the Dakwah. Students of Malaysian politics suggest that this turn was encouraged by several factors: the oil-boom, which created an impression of "God's favor" on the Muslims; the culturally disorienting effects of urban life, which induced Malays of rural background to embrace Islam as a means of coping with their distress; and finally the Iranian Revolution, which initially fired the imaginations of Malay youth.

Two Islamic organizations profited from this ideological reorientation. The most important was the ABIM, founded in 1971 by the former president of the Malay Language Society, Anwar Ibrahim. Although inspired by the reformist fundamentalism of Egypt's Muslim Brethren, ABIM displayed a more genuine enthusiasm for pluralism. For example, in 1981 it forged an alliance with a variety of interest groups outside the Islamic movement in order to oppose the government's "Society Act Amendment Bill," a bill which gave the

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[78]Mehden, Fred R. von. "Malaysia and Indonesia" in Hunter, Shireen. (ed). The Politics of Islamic Revivalism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 247-64.

regime unrestricted power to repress "interest societies."

ABIM quickly grew into a powerful organization; its formal membership was estimated to have increased from 9,000 in 1972 to 35,000 in 1980; by that year, it had established a network of independent schools; and most importantly, it commanded wide support in the universities.

The other organization to play a role in the Islamic revival was the Islamic Party of Malaysia or PAS. PAS was born in 1973, when the MNP, in a bid to emphasize its Islamic orientation, changed its name to the "Islamic Party of Malaysia." Unlike the ABIM, PAS had its social roots in the conservative, rural sectors of society -- among the ulema and religious teachers or ustaz in the states of Kedah, Kelantan and Trengganu. This conservative bent may explain why PAS showed a relatively greater readiness than ABIM to accommodate the universalist ethos of Islam to the realities of Malay nationalism and ethnic pluralism.

In 1973, PAS's leader, Muhammad Asri, demonstrated this commitment to reconciliation by joining UMNO in an expanded a coalition government. However, by 1973 UMNO interference in PAS's internal party affairs led a falling out between the two sides, and in 1977 PAS quit the coalition.

The ensuing hostility between PAS and the ruling party encouraged the ABIM to intervene on the side of PAS. ABIM supported PAS in the 1977 state election in Kelantan, and a year later in the 1978 general elections. In fact, three top ABIM leaders ran in the

1978 election on the PAS ticket -- Ustaz Fadhil Nor, Ustaz Nakhaie Ahmad and Syyed Ibrahim. These and other PAS candidates were defeated by narrow margins -- an impressive moral victory which encouraged the ABIM to further support PAS.

In the ensuing year, ABIM officials took up major positions in PAS. However, by 1980, the two groups were at logger-heads as a result of the attempts by ABIM activists to push PAS in a more Islamic direction. Muhammad Asri reacted to this policy by trying in 1982 to undermine the ABIM activists in his party. But his efforts badly backfired when the ulema of PAS supported the young ABIM activists. Asri quit PAS to form a splinter group known as Hizbul Muslimin (Party of Islam) or Hamim.

UNMO And The Politics of Co-optation

The ouster of Asri from PAS provided a clear signal of ABIM's influence within PAS. Indeed, the two organizations achieved their greatest political influence during their six years of close cooperation between 1977 and 1982. As the two groups became more popular, the regime put in place a policy designed to co-opt both the message, and the leadership, of ABIM.

This policy was presaged in the mid-seventies by the creation of PERKIM, or the Islamic Welfare and Missionary Association. PERKIM originated in the Prime Minister's office, which supported its efforts to proselytizing among the minorities, particularly the Chinese community.

It was not, however, until the early eighties that Prime Minister Mahathir's government began a more systematic campaign to affirm its Islamic credentials. Towards this end, it announced the "Look East" policy and the policy of "assimilation of Islamic values." The first policy called for the purchasing of non-British or non-Western products; the other policy entailed an effort by the government to promote greater public respect for Islamic values.

At the government launched the above two initiatives, it also moved to co-opt ABIM's leader, Anwar Ibrahim. In a move that took many by surprise, Ibrahim announced prior to the March 1982 General Elections that he was resigning from ABIM in order to run against a PAS candidate.

Evidently, Ibrahim's decision had been presaged by some prior bargaining; following the ruling coalition's victory, Ibrahim was appointed to a series of government posts ranging from Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department in 1982, to Minister of Education in 1987.

This development, combined with the regime's "Islamization" campaign, effectively undermined the PAS-ABIM coalition. With its former leader in government, ABIM tried to accommodate the regime, at times ignoring the latter's repression of opposition. As for PAS, it went the opposite direction, adopting a more radical stance on issues of Islamic reform. This policy, however, only helped the regime to capture the ideological middle ground by allowing it to position itself as a advocate of Malaysian nationalism and Islam.

Official Modernism vs. Radical Trends

In the ensuing three years Mahathir's government pursued a policy of selective repression against the opposition, combined with a heavy emphasis on economic development. The relative success of this economic program may explain the tolerance that some Malaysian parties demonstrated for the government controlled type of democracy that prevailed during the eighties.

However, it also appears that part of Mahathir's success is partly due to the convergence of views between him and Anwar Ibrahim. Evidence suggests that throughout out his career, Ibrahim maintained a basic commitment to a modernist approach. Mahathir shared this approach, and it was this commonality of ideological perspective that partly facilitated the cooperation of these two men. In fact the late Temple University Islamic scholar and modernist, Ismail Faruqi, was partly credited for bringing the two together.[79]

As Mahathir and Ibrahim tried to secure a constituency among the business, technocratic and professional sectors, PAS turned to the lower-middle groups for support. The dissatisfaction of this sector of Malaysian society with the unequal benefits of the New Economic Policy gave rise to more radical movements, such as student based The Islamic Republic. Inspired by the example of Iran, the Republic won control in 1983 of the Islamic Student

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[79] Sundaram, Jomo Kwame, and Cheek, Ahmed Shabery. "The Politics of Malaysia's Islamic Resurgence," Third World Quarterly No. 10, No. 2 (April 1988) p 858.

Society -- a group which had previously been controlled by ABIM.

Conclusion -- Malaysia and Indonesia Briefly Compared

This development did not, in of itself, presage the victory of radical Islam. On the contrary, there was little evidence of widespread support for the radicals. By the mid-eighties, the regime's implicit modernism seemed to have found both a social constituency, and an form of organized support as expressed by the ABIM.

Nevertheless, a coherent and explicit modernist ideology had not taken root in Malaysia's civil society by the mid-eighties. It is possible that the Mahathir government was simply unprepared to support such an ideology publicly, fearing that by adopting it, the regime government would be obliged to keep its word -- and thus open up the democratic system; alternatively, it may have feared that by adopting an explicit modernist approach it would provoke a reaction from the more conservative ulema.

Whatever the shortcoming of the regime's implicit modernism, Malaysia does provide an example of the ability of Islamic movements to genuinely support a process of competitive democracy, rather than merely exploit this process in order to impose authoritarian values. In an ideological context that is shaped by the cultural logic of accommodation, by a relatively robust middle class, an array of Islamic movements and groups in civil society, and a regime ready to tolerate if not encourage Islamic groups to "play the political game," Islam can contribute to sustaining a modicum of political openness and competition.

The development of Islamic groups in Malaysia can be usefully compared to the experience of Islamic groups in Indonesia. In the later case, there has indeed emerged a number of intellectual groups that espouse coherent and explicit modernist ideologies. One of these many groups is called "The New Thinkers." This group has attempted to integrate both Islamic and Javanese cultural tradition into an ideology that support democracy and pluralism. [80]

Some of these intellectuals are of priyayi background, a class of Muslims derived from the Javanese gentry and administrative bureaucracy. Others are from the abangan, a more middle class sector of the population that represents the majority of Javanese.

Indonesia's modernists have benefitted from three factors. First, Indonesian has a far greater population than that of Malaysia. The 184 million people who comprise the population have also been exposed to an indigenous version of Islam that is more heterogeneous than Malaysian Islam. It developed diverse forms on the thousands of islands that constitute Indonesia. A major strain in Indonesian Islam derived from the integration of pre-Islamic, Javanese cultural traditions, traditions which tempered some of the more authoritarian aspects of Islamic doctrine. Second, the modernists found a respective constituency among the middle class. Indeed, several modernist groups are distinguished by their large followings in civil society. Finally, the authoritarian regimes

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[80] See Howard Federspiel, "Muslim Intellectuals and Indonesia's National Development" Asian Survey 23, no. 3 March 1991.

that have ruled Indonesia have tolerated these modernist groups. They are viewed as useful mediators between the regime and more radical Islamist groups, even though the modernists have explicitly pushed for an end to authoritarian rule.

The Indonesian case highlights how important intellectual and cultural factors are to shaping a more modernist Islam. It also suggests that the Islamists of Southeast Asia may have something to teach the Islamists of the Middle East. This is a subject I will discuss further in the conclusion.

CONCLUSION

> There are many reasons for the power wielded by fundamentalism. First, the fundamentalist, as a direct heir of the pre-modernist reform movements, stands in a tradition that has sprung from within Islam and is indigenous to it.[81]

The experience of much of the Islamic world, and certainly of North Africa and the Middle East, confirms the above observation. To many Muslims, particularly those struggling to retain their identity in the face of the alienating affects of rapid economic growth and cultural change, fundamentalist Islam expresses what is authentic to Islam itself. Even a fervent modernist such as the late Fazlur Rahman was compelled to admit that the Islamic fundamentalist stands in a tradition that is "indigenous" to Islam.

That fundamentalist Islam so readily expresses an essential facet of Islam itself is understandable if one considers the context in which fundamentalist movements have emerged. In every case since Muhammad Wahhab first spread his puritanical message in Arabian Peninsula, Islamic fundamentalist groups have emerged in reaction to a perceived threat to the intellectual, social and moral unity of their communities. This perception of disunity and fragmentation was precisely what drove Muhammad bring God's message of tawhid and umma to Mecca. Thus it is logical that Muslims should look back at the founding myth of their own religion as a source of inspiration when confronting the "idols" of division and discord in their own societies. That this fusing of time and space is partly

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[81]. Rahman, Islam p. 222.

driven by utopianism is irrelevant; what is important is that the quest for unity is a essential part of Islam.

There are, however, other aspects of Islam which can "speak" to the material and moral crises that contemporary Muslims face. Indeed, as the cases of both Malaysia and Indonesia suggest, over time these features of Islam have been viewed as "authentic" to Islam as is the quest for spiritual and intellectual solidarity.

However, modernism can only become identified with Islam as a result of a transformation that is at least partly driven by indigenous cultural and intellectual forces. In the absence of such a transformation, the selective evocation of modernist themes will amount to little more than tactical posturing or intellectual confusion, as has been the case in Algeria and Egypt.

In short, the prospects for the creation of politically influential modernist Islamic movements depends on intellectual forces as much as economic ones. As Egypt's experience shows, the liberal assumption that there is a necessary "spill-over" from economic liberalism to political liberalism is misguided and even dangerous. Egypt's Muslim Brethren may indeed represent the "Islamic bourgeoisie;" but they as yet do not conceive of democracy and pluralism as something more than a tool to advance their aspirations for an Islamic order.

This is not to preclude the possibility that over time, and given the necessary conditions, Islamic groups will undergo a genuine and lasting process of ideological transformation. However,

there are several reasons to believe that the requisite conditions for such a transformation will not emerge in the coming decade.

To begin with, the very conditions which have undermined authoritarian regimes in the last few years are now promoting the rise of fundamentalism. The failure of authoritarian regimes to maintain their end of the "ruling bargain" has obliged reformists to offer their populaces a measure of political reform in return for latter's support of economic austerity measures and long term structural adjustment. However, because these economic reforms tend to severely punish the very social classes who form the "troops" of fundamentalism, it is likely that the wedding of political and economic reform will only reinforce fundamentalist groups.

Under these conditions, reformist fundamentalists may find themselves obliged to play the populist card. This self-defeating logic has even affected governments, as we have recently seen in Egypt, where Mubarak's regime has tolerated the trial and imprisonment of a writer condemned by both the religious establishment and the fundamentalist opposition for "heresy."

Fundamentalist forces will also take heart from a number of changes and developments in the international arena.

In the Middle East, the death of Khomeini has paradoxically strengthened Iran's role as an "exporter" of Islamic revolution to the Sunni Islamic world. As long as Khomeini lived, Iran's revolution was correctly perceived to be a Shiite affair. To the Sunnis, and particularly to lay Islamic activists, Khomeini

incarnated a tradition of clerical rule that Sunnis scorned.

However, with the death of the "Imam," and the subsequent amending of the constitution -- which weakened the power if the clergy -- Iran began to play a more "ecumenical" role. Thus in the Sudan, it secured a foot-hold the Sunni fundamentalist dominated government of General Beshir. This unprecedented development contributed to the determination of Algeria's military to crush FIS. In the future, it will reinforce the determination of Middle East and African governments not to open up their political systems any further.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, the continuing failure of the Arabs and Israelis to reach a peace agreement will also stoke the fires of fundamentalism. Undoubtedly it will do so most in those Arab states or communities most affected by the conflict -- among the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza, and in Jordan and Lebanon. Nevertheless, the persistence of this conflict will serve as a rallying point for fundamentalist forces, particularly during moments of regional crisis and conflict.

Further afield, the specter of escalating social chaos and religious or nationalist conflict in Eastern Europe has reinforced a general perception in the Islamic world that democracy breeds internal division and conflict rather than unity and social harmony. The recent disturbances in the U.S. also tends to strengthen the perception of the disturbing affects of "Western decadence."

All of this does not bode well for the forces of Islamic modernism. Every where they turn, they are obliged to wage political and intellectual war against a variety of forces aligned against them.

This said, it would be a mistake to conclude that the above historical and intellectual forces necessarily preclude modernist groups from playing a role -- at least on the margins.

Islamic modernists may not have the "troops" by comparison to their fundamentalist competitors; but the intellectual tradition which they represent still plays a role in the political and social discourse of the Islamic world. In the Middle East and North Africa, where authoritarian states have co-opted the Islamic establishment, where institutions to support modernism in civil society are often weak, and where cultural homogeneity has discouraged the growth of pluralism, modernism remains an intellectual current in search of a political structure. But in Southeast Asia, cultural and institutional pluralism, combined with state tolerance (if not encouragement) of modernist movements, has promoted the political institutionalization of modernist movements.

Malaysia's experience -- and that of Indonesia -- suggests that modernist movements need at least two conditions in order to prosper, or at least survive. First, they require a regime that is willing to tolerate a degree of religious pluralism that runs the spectrum from reformist fundamentalism to modernism. Unbridled repression often only encourages extremism.

The leaders of Egypt and Jordan have learned this lesson well. While both Mubarak and Hussein have prevented "mainstream" Islamists from taking power, they have encouraged them to express themselves -- and to debate their critics -- while simultaneously curbing the radicals. A coherent government policy that allows for a carefully calibrated degree of political pluralism -- as opposed to unfettered democratization -- can in fact make a positive difference.

Second, fundamentalists must be exposed to other cultural and ideological variants of Islamic political thought. Although modernists, such as those from Malaysia, participate in international Islamic institutions, there is little evidence that they have had the chance to engage the leading theoreticians of Islamic fundamentalism in the Arab world or Africa in a systematic exchange of ideas. Indeed, many Arab modernists, such as Sudan's Abdullahi An-Naim, have been obliged to take refuge in the United States and Europe where they have been isolated from their homelands.

It is possible, however, that the growing community of Muslims in Western Europe and the United States may provide a forum for a sustained debate between modernists and fundamentalists. Arab presses, such as Al-Saqi Press in London, have already made a determined efforts to publish and disseminate the works of prominent Islamic modernists. The modernist thinker Dr. Muhammad Khalil, former Minister of Justice in the Sudan, publicly confronted Hassan Turabi during his May 1992 visit to Washington,

demanding that he justify in Islamic terms, the human rights record of the Sudanese government.

Such efforts remain disparate and disorganized rather than systematic. They need to be prudently encouraged by all those concerned about the fate of democracy, pluralism and human rights in the Muslim world. In time, with a measure of sustained debate, economic reform and the gradual strengthening of civil societies, the voices of Islamic modernism may find a more receptive audience.

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Bibliographical Essay

The literature on Islam and politics is vast. Only a small part of it is of high quality, owing to the politicization of the Islamic studies field. In the seventies an endless flow of studies on the phenomenon of Islamic revivalism was published in the West. Much of this material was not based on first hand research, and a good many articles appeared and reappeared in slightly altered form. Part of this literature was shallow, tending to popularize its subject; another part was purely apologetic, while another part reflected an "Islamophobia."

In the mid-eighties, however, a new generation of literature emerged. Its authors tried to transcend the polemics of the essentialist-materialist debate by adopting more sophisticated approaches to the study of Islamic ideology and social structure.

Below I will comment briefly on the books, articles and studies that have been published on the Islam and politics over the last fifty years. The discussion is broken down into 7 parts:

First, a look at the literature on Islamic political theory, Islam and politics (in general) and the phenomenon of Islamic revivalism (in particular). Second, Third and Forth, a summary of the essentialist, materialist and interpretive literature on Islam and politics; and forth, fifth, sixth and seventh, a summary of the work on Islam and politics in Egypt, Algeria, West Africa, (Nigeria) and South East Asia, (Malaysia and Indonesia).

It should be noted that unless otherwise indicated, all the works discussed below are referenced in the above "selected bibliography." Thus I will provide a short-hand bibliographical reference for the following works.

1) Islamic Political Theory, Islam and Politics, Islamic Revivalism

The most cogent and sober short introduction to Islam is found in Frederick Denny's work, Islam, (1987). Denny provides the briefest of introductions to the basic concepts and practice in Islam, but covers all the bases. For a more elaborate but accessible overview see John Esposito's Islam, The Straight Path (1988). This book has a apologetic tone, but it is still reliable. The single best study of Islamic political theory is Hamid Enayat's Modern Islamic Political Thought. The late Enayat, an Iranian Shiite modernist intellectual, had a keen grasp of the intricacies of modernist thought. The book is best after the reader acquires a general introduction to the subject.

On Islamic modernism in Iran, I also highly recommend Chehabi's Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism (1991). Chehabi offers the best account to date of the modernist movement that predated Khomeini, and from which Khomeini appropriated some use themes.

Edward Mortimer's Faith and Power (1982) provides a more "popular" overview of Islamic political theory, in the context of a general book on the politics of Islamic revivalism. Mortimer, a British journalist with considerable experience in the Middle East, has produced the most readable and sophisticated general study of Islamic revivalism to date.

In addition to Mortimer's work, there a myriad of edited books on Islam and politics. The quality of these works varies, but they often include studies of Islam and politics in regions, such as Southeast Asia, that are rarely covered in more general works. Among these collections I recommend: Arjomand's From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam (1984), Dessouki's Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World (1982), Hunter's The Politics of Islamic Revivalism (1988), and Piscatori's Islam in the Political Process (1983).

The most recent and sophisticated studies of Islamic fundamentalism are available in the series now being published by the "Fundamentalism Project" of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Many of these studies are based on first hand research. Moreover, they are placed in a comparative framework, so that the reader can appreciate what Islamic fundamentalism shares -- and does not share -- with other fundamentalisms. The first volume of this five-year project has recently been published. See Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby, Fundamentalisms Observed (1991).

The above studies offer, as Edward Said would say, "representations" of Islamic activism. But there are works -- consisting of speeches and essays -- in which modernist and fundamentalist Islamists "represent" themselves.

Unfortunately, fundamentalist voices are under-represented. Translations of the writings of Hassan al-Banna, the first leader of Egypt's Muslim Brethren, are found in Five Tracts, translated by Charles Wendell (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978). A very good collection of writings by fundamentalists can be found in John Esposito's Voices of Resurgent Islam (1983). This collection includes a piece by the Sudanese fundamentalist, Hassan Turabi, which has clearly been written with a Western audience in mind. It provides an excellent example of "tactical modernism."

There are several excellent works by modernists available in English. The most sophisticated are those by the late Fazlur Rahman, including his standard "introduction" to Islam, (1966),

which is actually a modernist interpretation of Islam; his Major Themes of the Quran (1980) and his last work, Islam and Modernity (1989). An interesting modernist view of the concept of "bayah" can be found in Fathi Osman's "The Contract for the Appointment of the Head of an Islamic State," in Mumtaz Ahmad (ed.) State, Politics and Islam (Washington D.C., American Trust Publication pp. 51-81. I also recommend Abdullahi An-Naim's Toward an Islamic Reformation, (1990). Naim's work is inspired by the thinking and writing of the leader of the Republican Brothers, a small modernist movement in the Sudan which was persecuted by the former President, Numieri.

Laroui's Crisis of the Arab Intellectual (1976), can also be seen as an implicit a modernist critique of fundamentalist thought by a leading North African intellectual. The book is extremely engaging, but also affected by a "deconstructive" French style that can make it difficult to read.

A good over-view of recent modernist writings in the Arab world can be found in Boullata's Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought (1990). However, the best recent account of Arab politial thought can be found in Ajami's The Arab Predicament (1981). Ajami, a Lebanese Shiite who heads the Middle East Program at Johns Hopkins SAIS, offers an unrelenting, passionate and empathetic account of intellectual thought and political practice in the Arab world, especially in Egypt.

None of the above books should be consulted without a basic general background to Arab political thought during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The best single work on this subject is, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age (1970), by the preeminent historian, Albert Hourani.

2) Essentialist Works on Islam

The most sophisticated example of essentialist analysis, as I have noted in the above study, is Gibb's Modern Trend in Islam (1947). Grunebaum's works -- particularly Mcdern Islam (1964) -- are far less nuanced.

Bernard Lewis is often accused of being the preeminent essentialist of his day, although the vast majority of his work does not, in fact, betray an essentialist point of view. But his essay, "The Return of Islam" (1981), does present an excellent example of this approach. In this essay, Lewis argues that the more popular Arab regimes become, the more Islamic they must be, since Islam is central to the identity of Arab peoples. Moreover, he suggests that the essential characteristic of Islam is its dichotomy between the "House of Islam" and the "House of War." Thus by becoming more popular, Arab governments not only become more Islamic, but more hostile to the West. Given this argue, it becomes clear that Lewis

is using the title "The Return of Islam" in an ironic fashion -- since for him, Islam never left.

The essentialist perspective is also found, in more implicit form, in an array of books on the Middle East. The "Introduction" to Sylvia Haim's indispensable anthology, Arab Nationalism (1962), suggests in a very discrete way, that it is impossible for Muslims to adopt nationalist ideology without succumbing to the appeals of fascism, since Islam and nationalism, by definition, cannot be blended. Similarly, Vatikitois, The Modern History of Egypt (1969), argues quite blatantly, that Egypt could not modernize given its deeply embedded authoritarian traditions.

3) Materialist Works on Islam

Edward Said's Orientalism is a must read for any student of the Middle East -- regardless of what one thinks of Said's evident political motives. In addition, there are a number of other lively critiques of the essential which suggest, on an implicit level, a materialist alternative. My favorite source for this kind of critique are the essays found in the Review of Middle East Studies series, published London from 1975, 1976 and 1977 -- all with a grant from the Libyan government. These lively essay provide the most comprehensive "critical analysis" of the entire "Middle East academic establishment." More recently, Hisham Sharabi has edited a volume entitled Theory, Politics and the Arab World (1990) which includes some good critics of "cultural" perspectives on politics.

Beyond methodological critiques, there are also more academic studies which use the structuralist analysis to link Islamic ideology to class dynamics and interests. One of the most interesting texts in this field is the edited work by Burke and Lapidus, **Islam, Politics and Social Movements** (1988). The contributors to this collection bring "rational choice theory" and class analysis together to explain how and under what circumstances Islamic ideologies can induce collective action. The historical and geographical range of these essays is very impressive, although sometimes the writing is mired in jargon.

In addition the Burke and Lapidus collection, I recommend the Arjomand collection already mentioned above --From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam. The essays by Khalidi, Peter von Sivers and Eric Davis -- who writes on Egypt -- are particularly good. Also seek Roff's collection Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning, which is full of interesting essays that link Islamic discourse to class dynamics.

Lastly, for any one with the patience to read it, I suggest Leonard Binder's Islamic Liberalism (1988). Binder's work is Islam "post-modern." He uses the "deconstructionist" approach of Derrida to examine how fundamentalists redefine Islamic identity.

Embedded in Binder's terribly tense prose is a fascinating argument; he suggests that fundamentalists may -- in a dialectical fashion -- be setting the groundwork for the modernists by establishing an intellectual agenda that is independent of the state, and independent of the state-coopted ulema. This is not something that modernists can do because they are seen as outside the tradition. But by freeing Islam from the state, the fundamentalists will make it possible for the modernists to step in.

This process, he suggests, is moving apace; but it is an insufficient conditions for liberalism. The bourgeoisie must also expand in number and organizational size, and that process is still lacking. Binder concludes that this is not the time for liberal Islam.

4) Interpretive Studies

The Zonis-Brumberg study Khomeini, The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Arab World" (1987) offers a good illustration of the interpretive approach. In this work, the authors argue that the combination of social, intellectual, economic and political conditions necessary for a successful export of Iran's Shiite Islamic revolution were not replicated in the Arab world -- even in the Shiite communities of the Arab world. On this basis, the authors predicted in 1985 that Khomeini world fail in his bid to export his revolution.

Gilles Kepel's study, The Prophet and the Pharaoh, is also guided by an interpretive method. Kepel demonstrates the unique set of forces which came together in Egypt during the seventies to create the more radical form of Islam that eventually brought Sadat down.

5) Egypt

Two books are absolutely essential when it comes to understanding Islamic activism in Egypt. Richard Mitchell The Society of Muslim Brothers (1969) provides the best account of the history, ideology and organizational dynamics of the Muslim Brethren. This work, however, should be read in tandem with Nadav Safran's Egypt in Search of Political Community (1961). Safran traces the rise and fall of an entire generation of Islamic modernists in Egypt prior to the Second World War. He ascribes their failure to the nature of Islam itself, and to the socio-economic problems faced by Egypt during the period before and just after the war. He then argues

that the failure of these intellectuals to "modernize" Islam helped set the stage for the rise of the Brethren. The book is a classic.

I also recommend Kepel's study The Prophet and the Pharaoh, even though it tends to exaggerate the role of Islamic extremists in Egypt, by comparison to the more mainstream Brethren. For a better -- although somewhat apologetic -- view of mainstream Islam in Egypt during the eighties, see the chapters on Islam in Robert Bianchi's Unruly corporatism (1989). Bianchi's study of interest groups in Egypt is required reading for anyone interested in contemporary Egypt.

5) Algeria

The relative novelty of Islamic activism in Algeria is reflected in the paucity of good studies of the subject. The general political histories of Algeria by Jean Leca and Jean-Claude Vatin, L'algerie Politique, Histoire et Societe (1974), and L'algerie Politique Institutions et Regime (1975) are required background reading. They are extremely rich in detail and interpretation. Also see Entelis' The Revolution Institutionalized (1987), a general and not very profound account of Algerian politics under the FLN.

Arun Kapil, a graduate student from the University of Chicago who spent more than a year in Algeria studying the downfall of the FLN, also has written on recent events in Algeria. The chapters of his still to be completed dissertation provide the best account of contemporary Algerian politics anywhere. Some short essays by him can be found in Le Monde Arab, Maghreb Machrek and Les Cahiers de L'Orient. Both periodicals are essential reading for those trying to keep abreast of the situation in Algeria.

6) Nigeria

The best work on contemporary Islamic activism in Nigeria has been produced by Ousmane Kane. In addition to his "Mouvement urbain et Islam reformiste au Nord-Nigeria" (1990), which can be obtained from the "Fundamentalism Project" at the University of Chicago, see "Les Mouvement religieux et le champ politique au Nigeria septentrional: le cas du reformisme musluman a Kanon, 1978-1989" in Islam et societe au sud du Sahrah (Forthcoming). His work is based on first hand accounts.

The best overview of Islam in Nigeria is Abdorrahman Doi's Islam in Nigeria (Zaire, 1974). To keep abreast of events in Nigeria, I recommend The Journal of Modern African Studies and Africa Report.

7) Malaysia-Indonesia

The best single essay that I have come across on Islam in Southeast Asia is Manning Nash's comprehensive, and highly empathetic, "Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia and Indonesia," in Fundamentalisms Observed (1991). Nash is an anthropologist who has spent time in the field observing Dakwah groups, and thus can provide an "inside" account for their motivations, life styles etc... I also found the essay by Sundaram and Cheek, "The Politics of Malaysia' Islamic Resurgence" (1988) extremely useful for the amount of detail. Sundaram's essay on "Malaysia's New Economic Policy and National Unity" (Third World Quarterly, 10 (4), October 1989 pp. 36-53) provides indispensable background reading on economic development in Malaysia.

Howard Federspiel offers an interesting short account of modernist intellectual trends in Indonesia in his "Muslim Intellectual and Indonesia's National Development" (1991). I also recommend Liem Soei Liong's "Indonesian Muslims and the state: accommodation or revolt" (Third World Quarterly, 10 (2) April 1988 pp. 869-896. I also recommend, on general level, The Journal of Asian Affairs and Asian Survey. Both required reading for those keeping up with contemporary politics in Southeast Asia.